



HUMAN RIGHTS: ENHANCING EQUAL CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS IN EDUCATION

Proceedings of the UN Geneva Side Event
Held on 12 May 2017 and Lessons Learned



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE
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Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue



The Geneva Centre for Human Rights
Advancement and Global Dialogue

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**PROCEEDINGS OF THE UN GENEVA SIDE EVENT
HELD ON 12 MAY 2017 AND LESSONS LEARNED**

GENEVA, 12 MAY 2017
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FOREWORD

In the current context, wherein the world is witnessing heightened inter-religious tensions and a strengthening of xenophobic trends, “minorities” worldwide have been facing increased discrimination and/or exclusion. This worrying situation can be addressed through a two-track approach: by reinforcing the implementation of international standards on minority rights and/or by promoting equal citizenship rights. Against this backdrop, we must reflect on the important contribution that education on equal citizenship can have in providing pupils and students with a sense of equality and solidarity with others. The ultimate goal is to help youth to move beyond the biases and preconceptions that they may have inherited, and to learn to appreciate and celebrate diversity as a source of richness, rather than as a threat.

The present publication constitutes a follow-up to the panel discussion entitled “*Human rights: Enhancing equal citizenship rights in education*”, which was held by the Geneva Centre on 12th May 2017 at *Palais des Nations*, in collaboration with the *UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva*, the *International Bureau of Education UNESCO (IBE-UNESCO)* and the *Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva*. The purpose of this event, which took place at the sidelines of the 27th session of the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council, was to discuss human rights and global citizenship education, with a particular emphasis on enhancing equal citizenship rights through education. The debate analysed the impact of equal citizenship and human rights training in school curricula and teaching methodologies in a few countries (the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Republic of Colombia and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka), which served as case studies, and drew upon the experience of Finland, which constitutes an example of best practices in this field. In this context, the present publication provides the reader with a summary record of the debate, with the statements delivered by the panellists having participated in this side-

event, as well as with a think-piece drawing lessons learned from the panel discussion.

I seize this opportunity to reiterate the Geneva Centre's commitment to promoting human rights and, in particular, equal citizenship rights in all fields, from school age upwards. The enhancement of equal citizenship rights is an essential precondition for the development of inclusive, fair and just societies, founded on respect for diversity and on the promotion of a culture of peace. Education, in fact, stands out as the most fertile ground to sow and grow, in the minds of the up-coming generations, the seeds of human rights and, particularly, of equal citizenship rights. Education towards equal citizenship rights thus broadens and, at the same time, focuses the debate on human rights and global citizenship, highlighting the need to transition from the global level to the domestic one, and vice-versa.

Hanif Hassan Ali Al Qassim

*Chairman of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights
Advancement and Global Dialogue*

INTRODUCTION

The Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue has addressed salient issues related to islamophobia, racism and discrimination, by means of various side-events, as well as trainings and publications. In 2016 and 2017, a series of events organized by the Geneva Centre considered these matters, particularly *Islamophobia and the Implementation of UN Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18: Reaching out*, on 29 April 2016; *De-radicalization or the Roll-Back of Extremist Violence*, on 23 June 2016; *Muslims in Europe: The Road to Social Harmony*, on 19 September 2016; and *Islam and Christianity, The Great Convergence: Working Jointly Towards Equal Citizenship Rights*, on 15 March 2017.

The trend towards xenophobia and discrimination has been gathering strength. Against the dismal background of protracted conflict, the ensuing migrant and refugee crisis, and the violence perpetrated by terrorist groups, the world is witnessing an environment of tension, amplified by the manipulation and hijacking of religion for political purposes. The rise of populism and extremist ideologies is feeding on gravely flawed depictions of religions and beliefs, propagated by the media and by mainstream political discourse. A fertile ground for discrimination and violence has been developing, culminating in the adoption of divisive public measures rooted in religion-based discrimination, and negatively affecting Muslim communities in particular¹. In parts of the Middle East, a social cleavage between Shias and Sunni Muslims has also spread. In South-East Asia, Sri Lanka is coping with the social aftermaths of the conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils and, more recently, with concerns about the Muslim minority. In Latin America, as Colombia recovers from a multi-decade long conflict, citizenship and human rights education is a necessary tool for launching the reconstruction of a healthy, inclusive and peaceful society.

¹ Examples of such measures include the local burkini ban in France in 2016, which was subsequently annulled upon a decision of the *Conseil d'Etat*, or more recently, the January 2017 Immigration Executive Order banning refugees and nationals of seven Muslim-majority countries from entry into the USA.

The societal effects of generalized toxic discourse of hatred, stereotyping and discrimination are becoming more and more visible, as they magnify xenophobic sentiment and generate increased outbursts of racist violence². The continuous trend of scapegoating minority groups further exacerbates these worrying trends, dehumanizing their targets and, to a certain extent, trivializing acts of violence and discrimination.

There is an urgent need to counteract these divisive trends and to respond to the proliferation of hate, by instilling a culture of peace and tolerance. These feed on a tendency to emphasize differences and antagonisms, particularly concerning the two leading religions, Christianity and Islam, and to depict them as discordant and irreconcilable. The purpose of the side-event was precisely to counteract this discourse focused on divergences and divisions, and to seek solutions for building societies anchored in unity and tolerance, that celebrate diversity and promote equal citizenship rights.

Education is a particularly effective means for promoting inclusive and equitable societies, as it targets one of the most receptive and unbiased audiences: the youth. Mrs. Irina Bokova, former Director-General of UNESCO, noted in this sense that “*the risks and opportunities we face call for a paradigm shift that can only be embedded in our societies through education and learning*”³. Hence the topic chosen by the Geneva Centre for this side-event. In order to build tolerant and peace-driven societies and to counter the scourge of xenophobia and violent extremism, policy-makers must take into consideration the youth and their educators, and incorporate in the day-to-day curricula specific trainings on these values. Thus, the foundations of the new generations will be closely linked to respect for human rights, broadmindedness, and mutual acceptance, and the discourses of hatred and division will fade and lose their impact.

According to the 2011 UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training⁴, human rights education encompasses knowledge and understanding

² According to a crime report released by the FBI in November 2016, the rates of hate crimes against Muslims in the United States rose by a staggering 67% since 2015, with the rates of anti-Muslim crimes soaring to their highest levels since the aftermath of the September 11 attacks https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/18/us/politics/hate-crimes-american-muslims-rise.html?_r=0

³ As quoted in the report by IBE-UNESCO *The conceptualization of competencies related to sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles* of the series *Current and Critical Issues in Curriculum, Learning and Assessment*, February 2017, No. 8 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002473/247343E.pdf>

⁴ The UN General Assembly adopted a Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training

of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection. Pursuing the vision of education contained in the Declaration, the concept of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) was integrated as one of the global targets in both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁵ and the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action Education 2030, adopted in 2015⁶. Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education contribute fundamentally to the ability to live together in communities, in countries and as neighbours across national borders, thus enabling a flourishing global community to take hold.

UNESCO has done extensive work on the matter of citizenship and human rights education. Global Citizenship Education is one of the strategic areas of work for UNESCO's Education Programme (2014-2017) and one of the three priorities of the UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI), launched in September 2012. Ever since 1974, in its *Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, UNESCO has been highlighting the importance of infusing education with values entrenched in the international human rights instruments, in order to ensure the promotion of “*understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups*”⁷. The International Bureau of Education-UNESCO (IBE-UNESCO) provides intellectual leadership and promotes international cooperation in education. The broad experience of IBE-UNESCO in the field is crucial for a better understanding of the case studies chosen for this side-event.

Drawing upon the experiences of UNESCO and IBE-UNESCO, the side-event approached the educational frameworks of three countries, namely Bahrain, Colombia and Sri Lanka. The common thread between these case studies is their attempt to integrate human rights and citizenship education within their curricula, at various stages of the education cycle, to restore social harmony. The expertise of Finland facilitated the possibility to develop, from field evidence in the three countries, the lessons learned and best practices.

The side-event brought together experts with extensive knowledge in the

on 19 December 2011 (A/RES/66/137)

⁵ Notably in SDG 4.7

⁶ <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/incheon-framework-for-action-en.pdf>

⁷ Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 19 November 1974: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13088&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

field of education, particularly in post-conflict situations and representatives of the above-mentioned countries. The purpose was to analyse the impact of equal citizenship and human rights training in school curricula and teaching methodologies, with the broader aim of promoting a culture of peace and developing healthy, inclusive and fair societies. Given the current rise of intolerance, xenophobia, bigotry and social fragmentation, the suggested case studies served as best practices to identify ways to counter disquieting phenomena such as radicalization. Education and the acceptance of diversity as a social asset can create a sense of shared citizenship, in particular among youth, regardless of religious or other community affiliations.

In this regard, the debate reflected on the important contribution that education on equal citizenship can have in providing students with a sense of equality and solidarity, thus helping youth to move beyond the biases and preconceptions that they may have inherited, and to learn to appreciate diversity as a source of richness, rather than as a threat. The issue of education for equal citizenship fits against the backdrop of human rights education and global citizenship education, echoing the same ideals of a more tolerant, cohesive, and peace-driven world.

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE PANEL MEETING

The present report provides a summary record drawn up by the Geneva Centre on the discussions which took place during the panel meeting. It does not commit the authors of the remarks themselves, whose statements were recorded and are reproduced in full in the annex to the report.

I. Introduction

On the occasion of the 27th session of the HRC Universal Periodic Review, the **Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue** (hereinafter “*The Geneva Centre*”) held a panel debate on 12 May 2017, from 12:00 to 14:00, at UNOG (Room XII). The conference, entitled “*Human rights: Enhancing equal citizenship rights in education*”, was co-sponsored by the UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva, the International Bureau of Education-UNESCO (hereinafter IBE-UNESCO) and the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.



The goal of the panel discussion was to assess the impact of education in rebuilding societies affected by inter-communal violence, in the broader context of human rights. The panel discussion aimed, in particular, at exploring the role of education in promoting equal and inclusive citizenship rights, and was guided by the achievements of Finland in promoting equal and inclusive citizenship rights through education. Bahrain, Sri Lanka and Colombia - all three being countries previously affected by inter-communal

strife or conflict - were presented as case studies. Drawing on these case studies, the panel discussion sought to identify existing best practices and methods for reformulating educational curricula in the context of promoting equal and inclusive citizenship rights. The objective of the panel debate was also to identify gaps and areas for improvement requiring corrective action from decision-makers.

In light of these observations, world-renowned experts on education and on democratic citizenship rights were invited to provide their insights on the transformative role of education in building inclusive and peaceful societies and in enhancing equal citizenship rights in countries affected by inter-communal strife.

H. E. Dr. Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi, Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Bahrain, delivered a video message to the participants.

Opening remarks were delivered by the following:

- **H. E. Dr. Hanif Hassan Ali Al Qassim**, Chairman of the Geneva Centre's Board of Management
- **H. E. Ambassador Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri**, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva
- **Mr. Abdulaziz Almuzaini**, Director of UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva
- **Ambassador Idriss Jazairy**, Executive Director of the Geneva Centre

The panel debate consisted of the following members:

- **Mrs. Nujood Aldoseri**, Director of Intermediate Education at the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Bahrain
- **Dr. Ana Maria Velásquez**, Associate Professor at Universidad de los Andes, Colombia
- **Prof. Sunethra Karunaratne**, Former Professor at University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
- **Mrs. Kristina Kaihari**, Counsellor of Education - History and Citizenship Education - at the Finnish National Agency of Education
- **Mr. Renato Operti**, Senior Programme Specialist at IBE-UNESCO

Mrs. Samar Kildani, National Director of El Hassan Youth Award, Jordan, participated as a discussant.

II. Video statement by the Minister of Education of Bahrain: Youth remains an invaluable asset for social progress and global peace

The Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Bahrain, H. E. Dr. Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi, delivered a special video message to the participants during the panel debate. Dr. Al-Nuaimi explained Bahrain's vision of using education as a catalyst for promoting peace, tolerance and dialogue within the Bahraini society. In his video message, the Minister of Education noted that free education is offered to all students in the Kingdom as enshrined in the country's National Action Charter, the country's Constitution and the law on education. Bahrain has for decades, he said, remained at the centre of cultural interchanges owing to the country's strategic location as an international harbour in the Arabian Gulf. *"These included different people living in peace, tolerance and love regardless of their gender or religion"* - he observed, emphasizing that the Kingdom wants to preserve its rich cultural heritage and *"instil it in the successive generations of students"*.

In this regard, the Minister of Education made reference to the *"Citizenship and Human Rights-Promoting School Project"*, which instils values such as *"tolerance, coexistence, dialogue and accepting different opinions"* among youth in an attempt to promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in the country. Dr. Al-Nuaimi ended his video message stating that Bahrain's youth remains an invaluable asset for the social progress of the country and for global peace worldwide. The Minister of Education said: *"We consider our students to be a precious human capital for the future, and promoting values and concepts such as tolerance, dialogue and coexistence is an essential part of life in the world. (...) Therefore, the Kingdom of Bahrain, through this project, presents its pioneering experience in this regard, through using education wisely to consolidate and instil these values and concepts in the future generations who will act as agents to spread more peace and love in the world"*.

III. Opening remarks

a. Education as a catalyst for social inclusion

The **Chairman of the Geneva Centre, Dr. Hanif Hassan Ali Al Qassim**, noted in his opening remarks that UNESCO has played an influential role in sensitizing the international community about the “*transformative power of education*”. Dr. Al Qassim referred to the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, entitled “*Learning: The Treasure Within*”, prepared in 1996 by the French politician Jacques Delors, the then Chairman of the aforementioned Commission, and others. He considered learning to be a “*catalyst for promoting social inclusion and active citizenship*” and “*for enhancing cooperation between nations*”, with the purpose of promoting global peace and harmony.



Dr. Al Qassim noted that education has the potential to reverse populism by creating “*mechanisms for participatory citizenship in which we, as global citizens, learn to live together*”. He emphasised that the promotion of equal and inclusive citizenship rights through education “*enables diversity to become a force for social progress*”. In this context, he praised the recent efforts made by Bahrain, Colombia and Sri Lanka to restore relations between ethnic and national

communities affected by violence and intercommunal strife in post-conflict settings. The Chairman referred to these three cases as “*remarkable examples to be studied*” and called upon the speakers to identify critical success factors that can be replicated in other countries affected by intercommunal violence and civil disobedience.

Finland is also a role model for other countries, noted Dr. Al Qassim, emphasizing that the Scandinavian country has been a forerunner in the promotion of “*human rights and citizenship education in the core school curricula*”. He also pointed out that the presence of experts from Finland, Bahrain, Sri Lanka and Colombia would enable the participants to identify critical success factors behind building inclusive and peaceful societies through education. He said: “*It is undeniable that the first step towards social harmony and shared citizenship starts with educating our youth*”.

In concluding his intervention, Dr. Al Qassim informed the panellists that their contributions would be integrated into the concept-note of the Geneva

Centre’s forthcoming World Conference on the subject of *“Religion, Beliefs and/or other Value Systems: Joining Forces to Enhance Equal Citizenship Rights.”* This conference will be held in Geneva during the course of 2018.

b. Bahrain’s innovative education model



The Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the UN in Geneva, **H. E. Ambassador Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri**, presented Bahrain’s vision in using education as a catalyst to build a society where its citizens would *“live together in tolerance and in peace”*. Ambassador Bucheeri noted that his country has taken the lead in the *“Education for All Development Index”* - spearheaded by UNESCO – as a result of the country’s innovative efforts to promote education for all *“as a genuine human right”*. In line with the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Ambassador Bucheeri stated that Bahrain has become *“one of the leading countries in the field of guaranteeing human rights for all”* through education. This has been achieved through the adoption of legislation and the signing of international conventions, agreements and treaties upholding the right to education. *“In this way the Kingdom moves steadily and vigorously towards strengthening the rule of law and institutions”* - he said.

Despite the remarkable achievements of the Kingdom of Bahrain in promoting equal access to education to its citizens, Ambassador Bucheeri deplored the intercommunal strife and the civil disobedience that affected the country in 2011. This posed a threat, he said, to the country’s *“security and stability and its unique model of coexistence, diversity and peace”*. To overcome the fragile and precarious situation that emerged, the speaker emphasised that Bahrain resorted to education, to the promotion of equal citizenship rights and to the strengthening of human rights – at political, social and cultural levels – to restore social harmony, tolerance and national unity. He concluded his intervention stating that the panel debate would provide further evidence of Bahraini’s efforts in *“transforming schools into an integrated educational space, conducive to building citizenship and to promoting human rights and tolerance in order to enhance national unity”*.

**c. Welcoming remarks by the Geneva Centre’s Executive Director:
Let difference beget not division but a celebration of diversity**



Ambassador Idriss Jazairy delivered welcoming remarks, in his capacity as both the Geneva Centre’s Executive Director and the moderator of the panel debate. In his intervention, he stated that the motto of the panel debate was to enable difference to “*beget not division but a celebration of diversity*”. This should be conducive, he noted, to “*celebrating diversity both across borders and domestically*” by fostering the acceptance of diversity as “*an indicator of the prevalence of human rights*”.

Despite the need to promote peace and to celebrate diversity worldwide, the Geneva Centre’s Executive Director warned about the rise of populism and of xenophobia in Europe. The hijacking of religious faiths by extremist groups in the Middle East and in Northern Africa, he said, is also triggering a state of fear, hatred and intolerance that is gaining ground. In response to these challenges, he noted that societies need to promote “*greater equality in citizenship rights*” to make the notion of minority obsolete. Nations “*tend to resort to and play-up sub-identities*”, he said, when they fail in their political endeavours to provide equal and inclusive citizenship right to their citizens. Ambassador Jazairy then made the following observation: “*Vulnerable social components may become pretexts for exclusion and discrimination. Therefore, they quite legitimately seek representation in the political process to claim special protective measures. This further aggravates intercommunity rifts and can lead to violence and conflict*”.

To overcome this situation, the moderator identified a three-phase evolution process to move away “*from the fear of difference to the celebration of diversity.*” The first phase encompasses “*policy implementation measures*” taken at the domestic level to promote and to enhance equal and inclusive citizenship rights. The second phase, he underscored, includes the adoption and the implementation of legal frameworks for “*improved protection of vulnerable social components*”. The last phase concerns education as a tool to impede and to reverse the untoward effects of social division and the “*fear of the Other*”. The promotion of education as a catalyst for social inclusion, he noted, incites “*youths to move beyond the biases and preconceptions that they may have inherited*”. He finally emphasized the importance of identifying

“lessons learned and best practices achieved in global citizenship education” in countries affected by intercommunal violence and civil upheavals.

d. UNESCO’s pioneering role in advancing the right to education worldwide

In his introductory remarks, the **Director of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva, Mr. Abdulaziz Almuzaini**, stated that UNESCO has played a pioneering role in advancing the right to education globally. Mr. Almuzaini noted that the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education was the first *“legally binding international instrument laying down the core elements of the fundamental right to education”*. The UNESCO Director reiterated that equal access to education is a prerequisite for *“inclusion, reconciliation and dialogue, particularly among youth, regardless of social backgrounds. This lays the foundation, he argued, for “mutual understanding and lasting peace” in societies.*



Although he recognised the transformative power of education in promoting peace, dialogue and tolerance, Mr. Almuzaini underscored that societies affected by *“intercommunal or civil strife”* need to develop innovative education models to foster and to strengthen social cohesion. In this regard, he stated that *“human rights and citizenship education have an important role to play”* in responding to these challenges. He called upon societies *“to empower young women and men to become active citizens in facing and resolving global challenges and contributing to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world”*. This would, in turn, he noted, provide young people with an opportunity to *“foster mutual understanding and respect among youth, including through interfaith and intercultural dialogue”*. This is the spirit - he said - behind UNESCO’s vision to promote peaceful coexistence through education, embedded in the Education 2030 Framework for Action and Global Education 2030 Agenda spearheaded by the UN agency.

IV. Deliberations from the panellists

a. The transformative power of education

In his intervention, **Mr. Renato Opertti, Senior Program Specialist at the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO)**, referred to the landmark report published by Jacques Delors and others on the importance

of “*education as an agent of transformation*”. “*20 years down the line*” - he said - the transformative power of education is not being fully leveraged.



Firstly, human rights and global citizenship rights education are drivers for sustainable development. Education for peace and sustainable development are in the “*spirit of UNESCO and in the spirit of the international community*”. The notions of human rights and global citizenship rights education go hand in hand, he said, as they are intertwined and have “*to be connected in their understanding and in their practices*”. They play a fundamental role in transforming societies and

in fostering an inclusive and peaceful world in the framework of the realization of SDG 4.7¹. The challenge to achieve SDG 4.7 and to enhance global citizenship education lies in the difficulty for stakeholders to integrate these elements in transformative educational agendas and in conceptual frameworks.

Secondly, SDG 4.7 is difficult to assess and to monitor owing to the lack of universal definitions and of prescriptions related to global citizenship rights education. According to UNESCO, Mr. Operti observed, global citizenship education is “*a very multifaceted and multidimensional concept*”. Global citizenship education is not universally defined, he noted, but “*a constructed concept*” defined by social, cultural and political factors.

Thirdly, the speaker described the activities of UNESCO to promote human rights and global citizenship education at a global level. Mr. Operti stated that UNESCO provides advice to States on integrating these subjects in the countries’ curricula. In addition, the speaker noted that UNESCO is involved in “*providing guidance and tools*” for countries to decide about policy options when implementing global citizenship education. Based on this insightful analysis, Mr. Operti gave an overview of lessons learned:

- **First**, the integration of civic education and of civil education are prerequisites for the fulfilment and implementation of global citizenship education. Both concepts need to be integrated in the concept of global citizenship education to enhance the transformative role of education;
- **Second**, global citizenship education needs a “*systematic approach*”.

¹ Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by world leaders at a UN Summit in September 2015.

This requires revising policies, curricula, pedagogies and the role of teachers on a regular basis;

- **Third**, there is a need to focus on the synergies of providing access to education built on universal values and the “*cosmopolitan open idea oof the world*”, while, at the same time, respecting diversity and different local values and identities. “*We have to overcome*”, he said, crude homogenization and multiculturalism, as diversity is not equivalent to the latter. Mr. Opertti purported that we need to work towards “*qualified universality*” or “*qualified universalism*” where common values shared by humanity are embraced, while the concept of diversity is nurtured as an opportunity “*to learn from each other*”;
- **Fourth**, it is likewise important to streamline a process to integrate different views and national sensitivities into educational policies, frameworks and curricula. This process has to be of a crosscutting nature, he noted, so as to enable global citizenship education to become the “*spirit of education*”.

b. The transformative power of education in Bahrain



The Director of Intermediate Education at the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Mrs. Nujood Aldoseri, presented the achievements of Bahrain in restoring diversity and social harmony following the 2011 civil strife that swept the country. She said that Bahrain resorted to education to provide psychological counselling to children affected by the upheavals. “*We have treated approximately 5971 students in the psychological counselling centre for the psychological harm that has affected them*”, she said in her intervention. In this context, Mrs. Aldoseri praised the role of UNESCO’s International Bureau of Education (IBE) and, in particular, of Mr. Opertti, for their involvement in supporting Bahrain in implementing the “*Enhanced Citizenship and Human Rights School*” project. “*The objective of this project*”, she noted, “*lies in educating students according to the values of citizenship and humanism on the basis of good citizenship, moderation and tolerance*”. She further added that this project was implemented shortly after the 2011 civil upheaval that had “*damaged the social fabric of the society*” thus providing an opportunity to “*enhance civilizational identity, pacific coexistence, dialogue, acceptance of others, diversity and pluralism.*”

Mrs. Aldoseri noted that the project was initially launched in a selected number of high schools. The project was then further extended to include more schools during the course of 2015 and of 2016. Owing to the positive results of the project in instilling a culture of peace and of tolerance, she stated that the project would include, as of 2020, all schools in the Kingdom. *“The preliminary and promising results inviting us to go through this project include the decrease of violence and we noticed that awareness has increased through participation, cooperation and the collective spirit in one team”*. She concluded stating: *“the project is indeed progressing faster than we can imagine”*.

c. Restoring social harmony in Sri Lanka through education

The former Professor at the University of Peradeniya (Sri Lanka), Mrs. Sunethra Karunaratne, presented the experience of Sri Lanka in restoring social harmony following the end of the country’s civil war. The country is mainly populated by Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims, who were involved in a devastating war that lasted for 26 years. After the defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the government of Sri Lanka engaged in a process to examine the transformative role of peace and of citizenship education in restoring social harmony between ethnic groups living in Sri Lanka. In line with this view, Professor Karunaratne stressed that education was a powerful tool *“to channel the minds and hearts of people towards achieving peace and social cohesion”*.



To highlight the steps taken by the government of Sri Lanka to enhance the transformative role of education, the speaker noted that new curricula in Sri Lanka encompass civic education, human rights training and citizenship education. They are being introduced, she observed, for students at all levels of education across the country. Teachers also receive formal training to develop models enabling pupils to work together

in cooperative settings. Pupils were likewise offered the possibility of learning a second national language to break down communication barriers. The ambition, she said, was to *“develop good thoughts in children to perform their duties at family level, school level, in religious institutions and to help in community activities. By knowing their duties and rights, children learn democratic features that could be observed in school and then beyond the school”*.

Professor Karunaratne ended her presentation suggesting that Sri Lanka's 10 years' experience in post-conflict education training should be studied to identify lessons learned from her country's approach to education. Producing "*good citizens for the country and the world at large*", she said, requires "*integrating concepts of peace, social cohesion, citizenship and sustainable development in day-to-day life*".

d. The promotion of a culture of peace in Colombia through education

Dr. Ana María Velásquez, Associate Professor at Universidad de Los Andes (Colombia), spoke about the experience of Colombia in building a culture of peace and non-violence in the wake of the Colombian civil war. Dr. Velásquez stated that hope had been regained in the reconstruction of the country following the Colombian government's peace treaty with FARC, one of the country's leading left-wing guerrilla groups. "*Thanks to the peace treaty signed with FARC*", she said, "*high expectations were placed on educational systems as a means to face this post conflict scenario and to prepare the society to build a more peaceful, inclusive and democratic system*". According to the speaker, the Colombian government has identified three main areas where education can help contribute to build a non-violent and peaceful society.

Firstly, education has the potential to close the inequality gap that prevails in the Colombian society. Access to education enables people with a low social status to climb up the social ladder. Secondly, through education, she noted, people can learn to interact with each other "*in a more restorative system, where reparation, forgiveness and reconciliation with those who have been considered enemies is possible*". Thirdly, education is key to helping people understand their past through the building of memorisation in order to "*construct a more pacific, inclusive, democratic and sustainable future.*"



In this regard, the speaker observed that the Colombian National Ministry of Education launched in 2004 a national citizenship competencies programme aiming at creating a culture of peace and at enhancing human rights nationally. Peace education, she noted, can be perceived through different lenses. Firstly, a negative peace view focuses on the absence of direct violence, through the "*prevention of aggression and discrimination, and the promotion of peaceful resolution of*

conflicts and the support of reparation, forgiveness, and reconciliation of former enemies". Secondly, the positive view of peace is *"aimed at the promotion of social justice"* built on the pillars of equality, inclusion and democracy. In this context, the Colombian citizenship competencies programme regards citizens as individuals who develop *"constructive and pacific relationships with others"*, but also as individuals who actively and pacifically contribute to the transformation of societies. The Colombian model, she noted, adopts both the negative and the positive views of peace *"in the spirit of recognizing and enhancing the defence of human rights"*. This also takes into account specific standards for each domain of learning in line with the global citizenship education integration strategy classifying learning into cognitive, socio-economic and behavioural factors. In this context, Professor Velásquez made the following statement: *"In the cognitive domain, we have competencies such as perspective-taking, critical thinking and consideration of consequences, which are of course articulated with a specific citizenship-related knowledge. On the socio-emotional domain, we have competencies related to the constructive use of certain emotions, such as indignation, and to the development of emphatic responses, which are essential for the awareness and the defence of other human rights violations. On the behavioural domain, we include competencies such as active listening and assertiveness, which are fundamental to develop a constructive dialogue with others and to participate in the construction of a more inclusive, equal and peaceful society"*.

The speaker ended her statement noting that Colombia is *"putting a great effort in educating future generations of children and in enabling them to harness our current system to bring about a more peaceful and sustainable world"*.

e. Finland as a forerunner in the promotion of global citizenship education

Mrs. Kristina Kaihari, Counsellor of Education at Finnish National Board of Education, presented the founding pillars of Finland's acclaimed education model. The speaker stated that her country *"has always placed great value on education. Our society's well-being and prosperity is built on equity in education and equal right to learning. We have taken decisive steps to offer equal opportunities also for people with immigrant backgrounds to pursue study paths all the way to tertiary education, should they wish to do so"*. The promotion of human rights and the respect of human dignity, she said, are integrated in national core curricula at all levels of education. Education is based on *"equality and cultural diversity"* that aspires to promote *"democracy and active citizenship as well as global citizenship."* This plays an important role for Finland, she noted, as children should *"grow up to be responsible,*

active citizens”. In line with this view, Mrs. Kaihari stated that the objectives of Finland’s 2014 National Curriculum aim to:

- (1) *“Guide the pupil to become aware of himself or herself as an individual and as a member of different communities, to understand the importance of human rights and equality and to perceive the basic principles of society;*
- (2) *Encourage the pupil to practise the basic skills of democratic involvement and to discuss different views constructively;*
- (3) *Encourage the pupil to participate in the activities of different communities and to practise using the media safely and with social awareness.”*



In light of the foregoing, she observed that the recent reforms implemented by the Finnish government aim to present education as the key driving force *“in increasing social cohesion and inclusion”*. Children need to be empowered, she noted, so that they can *“find their place as active members of society”*. Subjects related to *“history, civics, ethics, religion, geography and health education”* embed human rights,

global education issues, interreligious and intercultural understanding to familiarize children with diversity and with pluralism. *“School democracy is an accurate means to acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment”*, she said. The Finnish educational system also greatly values the development of transversal competencies *“consisting of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will”*. Finnish schoolteachers train pupils to apply knowledge and skills in practical situations, to enable them to understand *“how rules and agreements are created”* and to *“judge their suggestions in the light of equity, equality and fairness”*, underlined Mrs. Kaihari.

In wrapping up her presentation, the Finnish expert emphasised the important role of teachers in addressing the rise of xenophobia, racism, bigotry and marginalization. She noted, *inter alia*, that training on human rights is provided on a regular basis to teachers. Funds for training of teachers working

in multicultural and multilingual school settings, in particular, are given special priority. The ambition is, she said, to “*reach out to young people at risk of marginalization and alienation*”. This would enable all those concerned to combat radicalization in the long run and would “*improve dialogue and coherent collaboration*” at an international and at a national level. She finally emphasized that the success of modern societies relies on the role of youth in building a democratic and inclusive society. Mrs. Kaihari observed: “*It is crucial to motivate and encourage our youth to participate in the development of our societies. The future of democratic values and our democratic system depends on proactive, engaged and empowered citizens*”.

f. The role of civic education in the realization of social peace

Mrs. Samar Kildani, National Director of El Hassan Youth Award (Jordan), addressed the role of civic education in the realization of peace and harmony in societies. Mrs. Kildani emphasised that education trains people “*to serve the society*”. Education also influences their values related to “*democracy, interaction and critique, research, acceptance of responsibility*”. The Minister of Education of Jordan, Dr. Omar Al Razzaz, she said, has implemented a pioneering education model aspiring to integrate religious values, tolerance and moderation with the aim of overcoming “*extremism and radicalism*”. In this context, she referred to a recent statement made by Dr. Al Razzaz in which he emphasised that the fight against extremism consists of *inter alia* combating ignorance, enhancing knowledge and encouraging critical thinking. Enabling social peace to reign, she noted, depends also on the need to foster social and economic development. Dialogue, negotiation and a preventative culture are key conditions to address the rise of violence and conflicts witnessed in many societies around the world. In this regard, the speaker called for a new model of education to respond to the challenges faced by modern societies. Mrs. Kildani made the following observation:



“The essence of education is to change behaviour for the better. As long as we learn, we improve our attitudes and our practices. However, we need a new model of education that is attuned to the modern area. We need education and training to enhance the capacities of youth, while at the same time sparing them from behaviourist teaching methods and paternalistic culture. This new teaching model will anchor the actual participatory culture and encourage conscious

responsibility-taking. This model will encourage dialogue, the realization of democracy, the development of human rights, the acceptance of others conceptually and actually, and coexistence, while accepting difference, pluralism and diversity, which are the wealth of societies as a whole”.

In this context, Arab experts on matters related to education, such as Mr. Hamed Amar (1992), Mr. Hassan Biblawi (1993), Mr. Saad Eldine Ibrahim (1990), have suggested that education should constitute the common cultural base of societies inculcating models of equal and inclusive citizenship rights and “*collective participation in society and in politics*”. Mrs. Kildani also highlighted that His Majesty King Abdullah Ben Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan emphasised that human competencies and enhancement of education “*represent the essence of the development of the nation*”. She then quoted King Abdullah, stating: “*No nation will be able to achieve rebirth without an education programme, and nothing can ever replace education in the process of state-building to change the world for the better, especially as we live in an era when competition between notions exists in the field of the knowledge economy*”.

Taking inspiration from these observations, Mrs. Kildani concluded by saying that “*education will never be a source to replace democracy, regardless of its content. It calls for the creation of an atmosphere favouring freedom of will and freedom of choice, as well as critical thinking that does not poison ideas under any pretext*”.

V. Interactive debate with the audience

a. The promotion of human rights through education in the UAE

The Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to UNOG and to other international organizations, H. E. Obaid Salem Al Zaabi, spoke about the experience of the UAE in using education as a vector for enhancing peace, tolerance and social harmony. Ambassador Al Zaabi observed that the UAE undertook numerous efforts to integrate human rights and citizenship education in educational curricula. He noted that the “*educational system at different levels has fully integrated the value of tolerance and cohesion in a multicultural society in which people from all over the world live harmoniously together*”. “*In our way of thinking*”, he said, “*the respect for others and the recognition of the equality of all human beings participated in overcoming all forms of discrimination by fostering a spirit of tolerance and peace among human beings*”.



During his intervention, the UAE Ambassador likewise emphasised that his country had enabled foreign pupils to learn in a teaching environment aligned with those in their respective home countries. Knowledge about the UAE’s institutions and the importance of the rule of law in relation to social and human relationships were considered as essential factors in UAE’s efforts to promote human rights through

education. In this regard, Ambassador Al Zaabi made the following concluding remark: *“Citizenship education must not focus exclusively on school based curricula, but should also include programmes and activities that take place outside of school, and engage parents and other segments of society”*.

b. The role of education in advancing the Palestinian cause



The **First Secretary of the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to UN Geneva, Mr. Ryad Aouadja-Awaja**, highlighted the importance of the transformative power of education. Although the Palestinians lost their land, he said, education has remained a source of inspiration for the Palestinian people. Referring to his own personal experience, he explained how he benefitted from access to

education in Arab countries. *“I had equal rights with my brothers and colleagues in Algeria”*, he noted, as access to free education for all has been a well-established practice in numerous Arabic countries. Mr. Aouadja-Awaja also referred to the experience of numerous other Palestinian intellectuals and political figures, such as Yasser Arafat, who benefitted from access to education in host countries granting refuge to Palestinians. *“This shows that Arab countries believe in equal human rights for all”*, he said. Mr. Aouadja-Awaja also used the occasion to thank, *inter alia*, countries such as Cuba, Venezuela,

Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Uruguay, France, Canada, Spain, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Finland and Norway for their efforts to guarantee access to education for Palestinians. He ended his insightful statement stating: *“I would like to conclude by confirming what H. E. Ambassador Jazairy has said: diversity is a source of richness and open-mindedness”*.

c. Enhancement of national unity through education



The **Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Algeria to UN Geneva, Mr. Taoufik Djouama**, referred in his intervention to Algeria’s efforts to promote policies of national reconciliation. He stated that the Charter of Peace and National Reconciliation was ratified in 2005 giving the country *“a new national perspective regarding national reconciliation”*. Mr. Djouama noted that education has played an important role in

promoting and supporting *“national causes, democracy, diversity, respect for others and humanitarian values”*. In addition, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Algeria also highlighted the transformative power of education in strengthening skills related to critical judgment. *“Arming students with critical thinking is very important”*, he said, so as to address the rise of extremism on the Internet. Mr. Djouama then praised UNESCO’s efforts in promoting social harmony and diversity in Bahrain and requested the representatives of UNESCO to give examples of other success stories.

In response to Mr. Djouama’s observation, **Mr. Almuzaini** stated that UNESCO has collaborated with numerous Arab countries to enhance quality of education and contribute to positive developments in policy-making. He stated that an institution was recently created in Saudi Arabia’s capital Riyadh to enhance quality education in the Arab region. UNESCO regularly issues reports, statistics and studies and offers advice to member States, he concluded in his reply to Mr. Djouama, to enforce *“educational policies”* and to *“adapt these methods”* to schools and to students.

d. Achieving political consensus in implementing educational reforms

The Geneva based representatives of the European Public Law Organization (EPLO), **Ambassador George Papadatos**, thanked the organizers of the debate, the panellists and the UAE Ambassador specifically

for their respective interventions. Ambassador Papadatos referred to the observation made by Mrs. Kaihari who emphasised that the emergence of a political consensus is a prerequisite to adopt educational reforms and curricula.

In this context, Ambassador Papadatos noted that certain societies with competing ideologies and different ethnic groups could be held hostage to internal disagreements and divisions in implementing effective educational reforms. Ambassador Papadatos asked the panellists to provide their insights on how to overcome this challenging issue.

Mr. Operti emphasised the importance of introducing crosscutting issues that can be applied across primary and secondary level, and among teachers' education. This would, he said, enable the world society to move from "*subject-based curricula*" to curricula nurturing the transmission of facts and of ideas. One of the main challenges in the world's educational systems, he noted, "*is to go from educational systems that are very much oriented towards teachers transmitting knowledge and students receiving knowledge, to systems where teachers orientate the process of learning, enabling learners to take the lead in the creation of knowledge*". Mr. Operti then drew the following conclusion: "*How you package and structure the educational system, in order to effectively empower students and teachers to collectively create spaces for knowledge and to respond to situations in life, is critical to what you are proposing*".

In her reply, **Dr. Ana Maria Velásquez** reiterated the importance of translating "*the public policies into what actually happens in the classroom, and then to transfer that to actual real life in our societies*". She stated that Colombia has made "*huge progress in incorporating these ideas in national curricula*", but noted that efforts are still needed to convert these ideas into "*children competencies*". In relation to the decision of the Colombian people to turn down *ex-post* the peace agreement signed by FARC and the Colombian government, Professor Velásquez highlighted that education was to be blamed as many people were "*emotionally manipulated in the campaigns and in the media to vote with outrage and hatred against all of our history of victimisation*". To overcome similar biases, the speaker emphasised the importance of strengthening skills related to critical thinking among Colombian citizens.

e. Achieving social harmony through education

Mr. Hani Al-Aswadi, President of the Hakki Centre for Human Rights, praised the achievements of Finland, Bahrain, Colombia and Sri Lanka in promoting equal citizenship rights through education. He stated that the "*enhancement of citizenship and human rights in the field constitutes one of*

the most important elements to build a generation” embracing the concept of equal citizenship and human rights. The notion of equal citizenship, he observed, can obliterate the term “minorities”, as governments would treat its citizens equally regardless of social backgrounds. In this regard, the NGO representative stated that Bahrain and Jordan “*are achieving a major success*” owing to their efforts to build a more tolerant, peaceful and open-minded society. However, the speaker warned about the situation in Yemen, as well as about the attempts by some parties to hijack education and use it as a propaganda tool to indoctrinate youth. He called upon UNESCO to condemn the “*shift of educational curricula into racist curricula*”, and expressed his wish for Yemen to cooperate with UNESCO to promote global citizenship and equal citizenship rights through education.

In response to the observation made by the NGO representative, **Mr. Operti** observed that there is a two-fold response to this issue. Firstly, curricula can be considered as a contested subject, he said, as they reflect the kind of society one wants to create, “*to develop and to become a social machinery*”. Secondly, curricula can also be referred to as a “*source of indoctrination and a source of providing people with a very narrow understanding of life, or inversely, a power of liberation of people having the capacity to think openly*”. In bridging these two approaches, Mr. Operti claimed that the blame should not be put on the teachers as they are obliged to follow certain rules and regulations set forth by governments. The challenges lie instead, he observed, in the political system of countries and “*how it directs societies to provide room and space for curricula*” enabling people to “*think openly*”. The mission of UNESCO is not to prescribe, he noted, “*but to broaden perspectives*”. Using Bahrain as an example, Mr. Operti stated that UNESCO and the government have resorted to an open dialogue regarding the understanding of citizenship and human rights education. UNESCO aims at becoming “*a knowledge broker, a knowledge facilitator and a policy dialogue facilitator*”, without taking decisions on behalf of countries, concluded Mr. Operti.

Mr. Almuzaini also commented on the observations made by the NGO representative. He stated that UNESCO is involved in reconstructing the “*educational system in Yemen*”, once “*peace and security*” have been restored in the country. “*The issue of education is very critical,*” he observed, as it “*represents a long-term investment*” requiring the country to take measures to rebuild the educational system and to reintegrate nearly 2 million children that do not attend school. Mr. Almuzaini stated that Yemen remains high on UNESCO’s agenda.

VI. Concluding remarks



The Geneva Centre’s Executive Director, Ambassador Jazairy, thanked the participants for their attendance and for sharing their “*wisdom that is drawn from experience at the field level*”. He then underlined the importance of promoting equal and inclusive citizenship rights worldwide. This is not a one-stop process, as countries regularly review their performances – such as Finland – despite the fact that they have developed a robust educational system. “*What applies in the case of Bahrain is completely different to what works in the context of Colombia, or in the context of Sri Lanka. Each case has its specificities*”, stated the Geneva Centre’s Executive Director.



Ambassador Jazairy also suggested that each country should develop its own roadmap in making education conducive to the promotion and the enhancement of equal and inclusive citizenship rights. In this context, he referred to a recent visit paid by the Chairman of the Geneva Centre and himself to Bahrain, where they were provided with “*a beautiful example*” of the transformative power of education. Ambassador Jazairy used the example of a group of four children who held a ball with their foreheads together. The task was to get to the other line of the playground, testing the pupils’ willingness to work together in a team. “*If you want to win*”, he said, “*you have to keep your heads together*”. In this context, the Geneva Centre’s Executive Director stated that the world society needs to move beyond the concepts of peaceful coexistence and tolerance. “*We need to create empathy*”, he said, “*with people we do not know and with people we do not see*”. The Sufi way of thinking, “*how do I get this love to extend to others in the same way as you have the love for God*”, he noted, could become the starting-point for creating empathy between people and to work jointly towards the promotion of equal citizenship rights.



Lastly, Ambassador Jazairy emphasised that equal and inclusive citizenship rights have the ability “*to transform societies through children and young people*”. This transformative aspect, he observed, requires stronger emphasis. “*I think what was said today about civil and civic rights tickled my mind.*” He noted that civil rights is what “*we are entitled to receive as individuals*” and “*what we challenge governments to provide us*”. Conversely, civic rights is about how we can establish a relationship with others and contribute to harmonious relations between people and nations despite differences related to languages, religions, races etc. In this regard, Ambassador Jazairy ended his statement stating:

“We could really make a difference by generalizing and giving more visibility to this concept of equal citizenship rights. We could do a lot to promote social harmony at the international level”.

DRAWING LESSONS FROM THE PANEL MEETING

1. Introduction

The concept of equal citizenship assumes that all citizens, including those perceived by society as “minority groups”, are to be considered as equal members of the national community and entitled to political and social participation. Equality in citizenship, which translates into equality in rights and duties between all citizens, thus encompasses the values of inclusiveness, respect for diversity, and non-discrimination.

The principle of equality between all citizens is enshrined in the constitution of most States, as well as in a set of international legal instruments. First and foremost, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, under Article 2, that “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”². This principle is reiterated in Article 3 of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which impose an obligation upon all State Parties to ensure the equal right of all to the enjoyment of the rights set forth by the Covenants themselves. Worth mentioning, furthermore, is the fact that most of the Declaration’s provisions (including the principle of equality in rights), although not binding as such, are deemed to reflect customary international law and are thus binding on all States. Furthermore, the principles of equality and non-discrimination, in particular, have attained the status of *jus cogens* and, by virtue of their peremptory nature, they give rise to *erga omnes* obligations, which cannot be derogated from in any circumstance.

Notwithstanding the formal recognition of equal citizenship rights, their practical implementation is still a matter of discussion. Within this context, there are three main approaches to equal citizenship. The first one, known as the “liberal model”, is based on a difference-blind approach that sees the community as a collection of similar individuals, who, as such, are entitled to the same civil and political rights, regardless of their differences. According to the second one, known as “cultural pluralisms”, the equal treatment of all citizens hinges on the maintenance of their cultural identity and on the recognition of such identity

² Article 2, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948, available at: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

through the implementation of *ad hoc* policies aiming at actively supporting and protecting their culture, for example educational or political representation policies. The third approach, named “communitarian model”, goes beyond the aforementioned ones. In light of this approach, diverse cultural backgrounds and national identities are not mutually exclusive and cannot be abstracted from each other; citizens can therefore be both members of the same national community and of different cultural groupings³.

In an increasingly globalized world, societies are nowadays characterized by a tension between two different trends: on one hand, the need to emphasize universal values based on a cosmopolitan approach to life; on the other, the impulse to preserve or even celebrate local values and cultural diversity, which are or become part of the identity of a given community. Given this juxtaposition, it becomes essential for States to enhance equal citizenship rights as a precondition for the development of inclusive, fair and just societies, founded on respect for, and celebration of, diversity in the context of shared national goals and on the promotion of a culture of peace. If the State fails to provide a framework for the fulfilment of equal citizenship rights, the risk is that some groups of citizens end up feeling disadvantaged and therefore resort to survival strategies based on religious, ethnic and linguistic sub-identities to the detriment of their national identity. This may result in their further social exclusion. To foster equal citizenship rights, individuals who associate with religious, ethnic and linguistic features considered to be “exogenous” need to be empowered to be able to fully participate in the development of the whole society and in the policy decision-making process. To this end, there is the need to be guided by a Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity⁴, and

³ P. Johnston Conover, D. D. Searing, I. Crewe (2004), “The Elusive Ideal of Equal Citizenship: Political Theory and Political Psychology in the United States and Great Britain”, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 66, Issue 4, November 2004, available at: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.202.459&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

⁴ This “Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity”, which is also known as the “Bennett Scale” as it is named after its creator Dr. Milton Bennett, consists in a framework aimed at explaining how people experience and engage with cultural diversity. The Bennett Scale represents a continuum extending from *ethnocentrism*, the belief of one’s own culture as “the centre of reality”, to *ethnorelativism*, the belief of one’s own culture, as well as of other cultures, as “relative to context”. The *ethnocentric* phase consists of three steps, namely (1) denial of cultural difference, (2) defense against cultural difference, and (3) minimization of cultural difference. The *ethnorelative* phase, in turn, consists of three other steps, notably (1) acceptance of, (2) adaptation to, and (3) integration of cultural difference. While moving forward along the Bennett Scale, we therefore transition from the lowest to the highest form of engagement with cultural diversity. In order to promote development along the above-mentioned continuum, it is thus necessary to understand and assess which phase is

to switch from an ethnocentric to an ethno-relative mind-set in order to have a better understanding of the “Other”. The ultimate goal is to pave the way for a fair intercultural, interreligious and interethnic “national reconciliation dialogue”. Such a dialogue is steeped of course in tolerance, but stretches beyond it to encompass the notion of respect of the dignity of the “Other”, which is an active and post-modern virtue, as well as the notion of celebration of diversity. Respect for diversity represents a virtue that individuals and society should strive to nurture, as it begets unity and even empathy, and that can only spring from mutual understanding.

Against this background, education may be considered as the most propitious and durable way of sowing and cultivating in up-coming generations attitudes supportive of human rights and, particularly, of equal citizenship rights.

2. Education as a tool for promoting human rights and equal citizenship rights

The acknowledgment of education as an effective tool to enhance human rights and respect for cultural diversity is enshrined in a series of international legal instruments. The Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights encourages States to “strive by teaching and education to promote respect” for the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration⁵. In light of Article 7 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, States must “adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups (...)”⁶. In this context, the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms urges Member States “to take steps to ensure that the principles of the

being experienced by a specific community, and tailor educational interventions accordingly. Further information is available at: <http://www.idrinstitute.org/page.asp?menu1=15>.

⁵ Preamble, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. Cit.*

⁶ Article 7, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Adopted and opened for signature and ratification by General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX) of 21 December 1965 entry into force 4 January 1969), available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>.

The Geneva Centre believes that one could replace the reference to “groups” in this text by the concept of “characteristics” in recognition of the fact that individuals with such “characteristics” may or may not join “groups” with others holding similar features, according to the degree of citizenship rights achieved in a particular society.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination become an integral part of the developing personality of each child, adolescent, young person or adult by applying these principles in the daily conduct of education at each level and in all its forms”⁷. Furthermore, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity provides for the promotion, through education, of “an awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity”, and advocates, to this end, the improvement of “both curriculum design and teacher education”⁸. The Report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century to UNESCO underscores that “the task of education is to teach, at one and the same time, the diversity of the human race and an awareness of the similarities between, and the interdependence of, all humans”⁹. Finally, the aforementioned precepts as well as the principles contained in the 1974 Recommendation are perfectly in line with Target 4.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which prescribes that “all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”¹⁰.

The enhancement of equal citizenship rights *tout court* is neither explicitly enshrined in international legal instruments nor is it directly contemplated by the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005 – ongoing) or other international plans of action and guidelines. The promotion of equal citizenship rights through education should therefore be considered in light of the broader aim to enhance human rights education at large. The importance of human rights education was raised by the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993. Under paragraph 33, the Vienna Declaration and

⁷ Point 11, Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 19 November 1974, available at: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13088&URL_DO=-DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

⁸ Point 7, Annex II Main lines of an action plan for the implementation of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2 November 2011), available at: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

⁹ Delors et al. (1996), *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Paris, UNESCO.

¹⁰ Target 4.7, Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, entered into force on 1 January 2016, available at: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>.

Programme of Action states that education is essential to strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to foster understanding, peace and harmonious relations between all groups and individuals, without distinction of any kind such as race, sex, language or religion. According to the 2011 UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, human rights education should consist in a lifelong process concerning all ages and encompassing all educational, training, information, awareness-raising and learning activities whose aim is the promotion of universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms¹¹. Human rights education should therefore comprise three main dimensions: education (a) *about*, (b) *through*, and (c) *for* human rights¹². Along the same lines, therefore, the promotion of equal citizenship rights in education should encompass education (a) *about*, (b) *through*, and (c) *for* equal citizenship.

3. From global citizenship education to equal citizenship rights in education, and vice-versa

While promoting *equal* citizenship rights education, which is founded on the recognition of the right of all citizens within a nation to be equal before the law, the international community has also made remarkable efforts to strengthen *global* citizenship education. Global Citizenship Education (GCED) refers to “a sense of belonging to the global community and a common sense of humanity”, and is based on a shared solidarity and collective identity among the members of the said global community¹³. This concept was integrated as one of the global targets in both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (target 4.7) and the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action Education 2030 (adopted in 2015), and constitutes one of the strategic areas of work for UNESCO’s Education Programme (2014-2017) as well as one of the three priorities of the UN Secretary-General’s Global Education First Initiative (launched in September 2012).

According to UNESCO, GCED has three complementary dimensions: (a) cognitive; (b) socio-emotional; and (c) behavioural¹⁴. The first dimension relates to the learners’ acquisition of knowledge, understanding and critical

¹¹ Articles 2 and 3, United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (Adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2011, by Resolution A/RES/66/137), available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/467/04/PDF/N1146704.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹² Article 2, *Ibid*.

¹³ What is global citizenship education?, A4, *The ABCs of Global Citizenship Education*, UNESCO, available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002482/248232e.pdf>.

¹⁴ What is global citizenship education?, A5, *Ibid*.

thinking aimed at raising awareness about the need to respect differences and diversity. The second dimension aims at developing the socio-emotional sphere of learners, for the purpose of enhancing the above-mentioned sense of belonging to the global community. The third and last dimension pertains to the practical implementation of the first two aspects, and ascribes an active role and responsibility to learners, in order for the latter to promptly shape peaceful and sustainable societies at the local, national and global level¹⁵. By means of these three interrelated dimensions, GCED promotes non-discrimination and respect for diversity in order to build peace-driven societies.

Against this background, education towards equal citizenship rights broadens and, at the same time, focuses the debate on human rights and global citizenship education, highlighting the need to transition from the global level to the domestic one, and *vice-versa*. The lessons learnt and best practices achieved in global citizenship education may thus be a thought-provoking input as well as stimulating guidelines for the purpose of promoting equal citizenship rights at the national level, notably in countries emerging from conflict or civil strife. A tripartite attitudinal change affecting the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural human faculties is essential to promote global citizenship education. A similar pattern should apply to the enhancement of equal citizenship rights in education at the national level. This could be fostered by means of promoting a sense of solidarity as well as intercultural, interreligious and interethnic sensitivity in pupils and students of different ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds. A sense of true belonging can encompass the global community only if a feeling of national unity and inclusion is effectively fostered.

4. Is there a universal model for the promotion of equal citizenship rights through education?

As the promotion of equal citizenship rights *tout court* in education is still an ongoing process, there is no ideal model that can be resorted to for the purpose of assessing opportunities and challenges ahead in this particular field. Nevertheless, regardless of the specific aims set in the context of national educational strategies, a series of specific actions and steps need to be undertaken at the national level for a sustainable systemic change to occur. According to UNESCO and IBE-UNESCO, any systemic educational change implies a three-phase process, which corresponds to three main interconnected levels of action: (a) *a change in the national policies*; (b) *a change in the structures and systems*; and (c) *a change in classroom methodologies*.

In the IBE's "*Reaching out to all learners: a Resource Pack for Supporting*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Inclusive Education”, for instance, this three-phase process has been shaped along three interconnected guidelines in the context of the promotion of inclusive education: (a) reviewing national policies; (b) leading inclusive school development; and (c) developing inclusive classrooms¹⁶. The first guideline aims at providing policy-makers at the national level with a framework for creating a policy context in which the other two guidelines may be effectively implemented. For this purpose, it is fundamental to stimulate a constructive dialogue among policy-makers, as well as between policy-makers and other key stakeholders (not only the Ministry of Education and other Ministries, but also curriculum developers at large, education experts, training institutions, civil society representatives, etc.) within a country. At this level, discussions should be conducted around two main elements, which constitute “levers of change”: (a) the clarification of the definition of inclusive education; and (b) the establishment of indicators aimed at measuring educational performance¹⁷. The second guideline aims at supporting senior staff (deans, permanent teaching staff, trainers, and others) in reviewing and developing their schools. This may be achieved by measuring schools’ performance against key indicators, mainly presence, participation and achievement of all learners, and by fostering effective leadership, dialogue and collaboration at every level of the school, not only in classrooms¹⁸. The third and last guideline aims at supporting individual teachers in engaging children in a more effective and inclusive way during classes. To this end, it is fundamental that teachers share ideas and support one another in developing new practices and teaching methods, also by means of workshops and other training activities, in order to engage pupils and students more effectively¹⁹.

According to the Geneva Centre, in order to enhance education for equal citizenship rights, in the broader context of human rights education, one may thus draw inspiration from the above-mentioned model for the promotion of inclusive education, which may be considered as a *passe-partout*. A systemic educational change devoted to the promotion of equal citizenship rights in education should therefore follow a tripartite path, implying: (a) a review of national policies, by means of a constructive dialogue among all key stakeholders; (b) the adoption of a whole-school approach, whereby all school staff members collaborate in order to promote equal citizenship rights in the

¹⁶ IBE-UNESCO (2016), *Reaching out to all Learners: a Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education*, Training Tools for Curriculum Development, Geneva.

¹⁷ *Id.*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁸ *Id.*, pp. 46-48.

¹⁹ *Id.*, pp.108-110.

school environment, not only in the curricula; (c) the development of *ad hoc* teaching practices and methodologies aimed at enhancing equal citizenship rights in the classroom. The ultimate goal is to heighten that sense of inclusion and of belonging to a nation, by resorting to the aforementioned cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural approach.

An example of application of this kind of tripartite structure may be provided by the Guide for Policy-Makers drawn up by UNESCO²⁰ for the purpose of preventing violent extremism through education. This may be deemed particularly helpful in this context inasmuch as the promotion of equal citizenship rights and the prevention of violent extremism share the same values of inclusiveness, non-discrimination and respect for diversity, as well as the same ambition to instil a sense of solidarity and build learner’s resilience to narratives of hatred, thereby delegitimizing the use of violence. Some of the action areas as well as of the modalities of implementation presented by this guide may therefore be “borrowed” and applied to the promotion of equal citizenship rights in education.

With regard to action areas, three aspects are of particular interest to this review. Firstly, there is the need to reflect the principles of inclusion and respect for diversity in the curricula, textbooks and other teaching materials, in order to avoid misrepresentation and marginalization of so-called “minority groups” and to remove any reference to hate speech and incitement to violence. Secondly, in order to better instil these values in pupils and students of all ages, it is fundamental to go beyond curricula and textbooks, and develop, at the school level, alternative opportunities for students to learn about their own and other cultures, mainly by means of clubs, sport activities, debating societies, as well as other extracurricular activities²¹. Schools are, in fact, one of the most important places of socialization and, if not adequately equipped, they may serve as a preferred ground for fostering feelings of exclusion and intolerance²². Thirdly, it is necessary to enhance cooperation and dialogue between all stakeholders playing an education role, such as teachers, families, religious communities and non-religious worldview organizations²³.

As concerns modalities of implementation, among the approaches proposed in the guide, three are of particular relevance:

²⁰ UNESCO (2017), *Preventing Violent Extremism through Education, A guide for policy-makers*, Paris, available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002477/247764e.pdf>.

²¹ *Id.*, pp. 30 and 39.

²² *Id.*, p. 36.

²³ *Id.*, pp. 44-46.

- a sector-wide approach, which consists in seeking cooperation between all education stakeholders (from the Ministry of Education to other Ministries, from education experts to training institutions) in order to review and reform national policies as well as curricula in this regard²⁴;
- a whole-school approach, which considers the school as a comprehensive learning environment and thus implies collaborative action in and by a school community at large (also by means of school assemblies, youth-driven projects, and debate clubs)²⁵;
- teacher training and support, which aims at reinforcing, by means of capacity-building activities or peer-to-peer exchanges, the educators' capacity to interact with, and actively engage learners in the classroom, in order to prevent discrimination and radicalization²⁶.

The above-mentioned models can be merged, and the structures and approaches presented above can be replicated. It ensues that promoting a systemic change in the education systems of countries emerging from conflict or civil strife, for the purpose of enhancing equal citizenship rights in education, requires the following steps:

- a) reforming national policies, and revising curricula, textbooks and other teaching materials;
- b) fostering an inclusive scholastic environment, capable of promoting equal citizenship rights in daily life;
- c) strengthening educators' capacity to raise awareness about different cultural, religious and ethnic realities, and to instil the values of non-discrimination and respect for diversity in students within a classroom, where secularity, which celebrates diversity, should prevail over secularism, which claims instead to prohibit or erase non-mainstream mores in the name of national unity.

For these purposes, cross-sector dialogue and cooperation should be promoted, at all levels, in order to engage all key stakeholders in such an inclusive and comprehensive process. It is worth mentioning, nevertheless, that “*one size does not fit all*” and that, therefore, there is no universal model applicable to all countries²⁷. Hence, the systemic education change aspired to in order to promote equal citizenship rights will be the result of specific contextual factors, such as (a) institutional, financial and human resources, (b) political

²⁴ *Id.*, p. 56.

²⁵ *Id.*, p. 60.

²⁶ *Id.*, pp. 58-59.

²⁷ *Id.*, p. 54.

commitment, and (c) vulnerability to inequality and discrimination²⁸.

In this context, **Finland** constitutes an example of best practices and is widely recognized as a model of successful integration of human rights and citizenship values within the education system. The Finnish case seems in fact to fully reflect the above-mentioned tripartite structure, promoting, at the same time, (a) a change in the national policies; (b) a change in the school development plan; and (c) a change in classroom methodologies.

5. Finland as an example of best practices

Finland has a long history of integration of human rights and intercultural values in education. Since it joined UNESCO in 1996, Finland has been the host of a series of international conferences on the promotion of human rights in education. The Finnish town of Turku hosted, in 1997, the first UNESCO Regional Conference on Human Rights Education in Europe, whereas the UNESCO Conference on Intercultural Education took place in Jyväskylä, in 2003²⁹. Since then, the Finnish National Agency for Education (before January 2017, Finnish National Board of Education)³⁰ has committed to incorporating the values of respect for human dignity and cultural diversity in the Finnish education system, for the purpose of seeking a more just and equal society.

More recently, from 2012 to 2016, pursuant to the 2012 Government's Decree, the Finnish National Board of Education led a National Core Curriculum reform process, which resulted in the entry into force of two new national curricula: (a) the *National Core Curriculum for Basic Education*, in 2014; and (b) the *National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Schools*, in 2015. This reform process involved a wide range of stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Education and other relevant Ministries, local education authorities, teacher educators and researchers from all over the country, as well as civil society representatives³¹. In both the National Core Curricula, respect for human rights and, in particular, for equal citizenship rights is strengthened by means

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Human Rights Centre (2014), *Human Rights Education in Finland*, Helsinki, p. 20.

³⁰ As a national development agency, the Finnish National Agency for Education has a wide range of tasks. It is responsible for developing education and training, early childhood education and care, and lifelong learning, as well as for promoting internationalization. Its activities include implementing national education policies, preparing the national core curricula and requirements for qualifications, developing education and teaching staff, as well as providing services for the education sector, such as publishing education materials.

³¹ I. Halinen (2017), *The conceptualization of competencies related to sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles*, IBE-UNESCO, Paris, p. 15, available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002473/247343e.pdf>.

of the establishment of basic values, transversal competencies and diversified subjects (including human rights and citizenship education). Among the basic values which permeate the entire curricula, two are particularly relevant in this context: (a) the importance of humanity, general knowledge and ability, equality and democracy; and (b) cultural diversity as a richness. Their purpose is to stress the importance of human rights and incite students to appreciate the inviolability of human dignity as well as the importance of democracy³². The core curricula also aim at strengthening students' transversal competencies, such as (a) cultural competence, interaction and expression, as well as (b) participation and involvement, in order to develop each student both as a human being and as a citizen³³.

In order to lay the foundation for the development of these transversal competencies, nevertheless, the establishment of abstract basic values is not sufficient. That is why the Finnish educational reform also paid great attention to the need to develop the schools' operating culture as a key element connected to the whole school approach, to be considered as the main driving factor behind the implementation of the aforementioned educational policies. Here lies a key factor to achieve a sustainable, systemic change: the reform of the whole scholastic environment.

In light of the Finnish case, the learning environment also needs to provide an example of sustainable lifestyle and well-being. For this reason, the Finnish educational reform aimed at improving the school environment by fostering democratic values, positive cooperation and participative practices, mainly by means of school councils, afternoon clubs, youth-driven projects, assemblies, as well as other regular activities³⁴. In this context, principles such as cultural diversity, language awareness, participation, democratic action, equality and equity play an essential role in safeguarding everyone's fundamental rights and everyone's opportunity for participation, while addressing individual needs³⁵. These principles encourage pupils and students of all ages to learn together across cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious boundaries, promoting respect for cultural diversity and creating a setting for genuine inter-cultural interaction and communality, thereby laying the foundation for the development of equal citizenship rights as well as of global citizenship³⁶. During this phase as well, wide-sector collaboration is strongly encouraged, mainly through cooperation

³² *Id.*, p. 20.

³³ *Id.*, p. 27.

³⁴ *Id.*, p. 21.

³⁵ *Id.*, p. 44.

³⁶ *Id.*, p. 41.

between the school staff, on one hand, and families and other segments of the community, on the other.

The new core curricula also aim at reinforcing teachers' capacity to enhance learners' motivation, including by resorting to methods that encourage their experience of inclusion within a working group³⁷. As stated by Ms. Kristina Kaihari, *Counsellor of Education (History and Citizenship Education) at the Finnish National Agency of Education*, on the occasion of the Geneva Centre's panel discussion on "*Human Rights: Enhancing Equal Citizenship Rights in Education*", funds are also allocated by the Finnish Government for in-service mandatory training of teachers, for the purpose of reinforcing their ability to work in a multicultural and multilingual school environment and to teach about human rights, preventing social exclusion and marginalization.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that, throughout the above-mentioned three phases, the engagement of civil society representatives, including representatives of minority groups (particularly the Roma and Sámi), is of paramount importance and plays a key role. After all, "*the social task of (...) education is to promote equity, equality and justice*"³⁸.

6. Case-studies: Countries working towards the promotion of equal citizenship education, in the broader context of human rights education

Drawing upon the experience of Finland, and in compliance with the criteria outlined by UNESCO and IBE-UNESCO, the present analysis will examine the educational frameworks of three countries, namely Bahrain, Colombia and Sri Lanka. The common thread between these case studies is their commitment to integrating human rights and citizenship education within their curricula, at various stages of the education cycle, for the purpose of restoring and strengthening social harmony within the context of societies that are characterized by rich diversity and/or by post-conflict patterns.

I. Bahrain

The Bahraini educational reform started in 2004, when the Ministry of Education first introduced citizenship and human rights values in the national curricula. The Bahraini first educational reform is articulated into four transitional phases: (a) the introduction of a new curriculum pertaining to Education for Citizenship (2004); (b) the introduction of practical courses in secondary education, namely "Life Skills" and "Community Service", whose

³⁷ *Id.*, p. 25.

³⁸ *Id.*, p. 39.

aim is to educate Bahraini students on citizenship principles and practices (2006-2007); (c) the introduction of a separate curriculum on human rights and non-discrimination values in order to promote students' interest in democracy, participation and respect for diversity (2010-2011); (d) the creation of a comprehensive national framework (the "General Guiding Framework for the Kingdom of Bahrain's National Curriculum") for the design of future curricula, in compliance with international standards and trends³⁹.

In the wake of the revolutionary wave of protests that characterized what has been dubbed "the Arab Spring," insurrections broke out in Bahrain in 2011. The Bahraini Government decided to address the unrest by means of a further educational reform aiming at instilling citizenship and human rights values in pupils and students of all ages. In line with the above-mentioned reforming policies, in 2012, the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Bahrain signed an agreement with the International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO) in order to revise the Bahraini educational policies and curricula through the lens of human rights and equal citizenship values. In accordance with the ideal tripartite process envisaged by IBE-UNESCO, the Bahraini educational reform also revolved around three main axes: (a) national curricula; (a) school environment; and (c) teachers' training.

With regard to the first axis, the Bahraini Ministry of Education launched a five-year action plan designed to assess and revise national curricula, focussing on the practical implementation of these curricula in pilot schools. In this context, the General Guiding Framework for the Kingdom of Bahrain's National Curriculum served as a basis for including the principles of human dignity, respect for diversity and peace in future projects and programmes. As concerns the second axis, the Ministry of Education also designed and implemented a series of school projects and activities, whose aim is to instil in pupils and students of all ages a sense of solidarity and of belonging to a community, by reinforcing the values of national unity, fostering inclusion and participation, and rejecting any form of discrimination and sectarianism. *Inter alia*, these activities included: the "My School is My Homeland" project⁴⁰, sport activities, workshops, national celebrations, fora, citizenship and human rights committees, as well as painting and other competitions⁴¹. Finally,

³⁹ Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Bahrain, *Brochure on "Enhancing Citizenship and Human Rights in Public Schools"*.

⁴⁰ According to the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Bahrain, *Op. Cit.*, "This project stimulates the efforts to contain the negative implications of the deplorable events, which have negatively affected the school community in an unprecedented way".

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

regarding the third axis, the Ministry has also organized numerous workshops and training programmes aimed at strengthening teachers' capacity to enhance equal citizenship and human rights and to promote dialogue in the classroom⁴².

The surveys conducted have brought out fairly positive results. In the short-term one can certainly assert that the Kingdom is on the right track, and that remarkable efforts have been made by the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the international community (in particular with the IBE-UNESCO), in order to enhance equal citizenship rights and other human rights in education, at all levels. Nevertheless, throughout this reform process, the initiative needs to move gradually and increasingly from the Ministry of Education to more decentralised levels. It must be relayed by local civil society, as well as by other essential segments of the community (such as training institutions, religious and non-religious organizations, etc.). Only a cross-sector reform process actively involving all education stakeholders can, in fact, lay the foundation for fruitful practices capable of promoting inclusiveness, solidary and respect for diversity in the long-term.

II. Colombia

Following nearly fifty years of armed political conflict, Colombia continues to be afflicted by social inequalities, poverty, and restricted political participation, which have fed a widespread sense of social exclusion as well as of legitimization of violence. Against this backdrop, education is seen by the Ministry of Education as an essential tool to develop a culture of peace, equity, and democracy. During the past two decades, Colombia has been therefore making remarkable efforts in order to instil human rights and democratic values. The promotion of human rights through education is, in fact, one of the priorities of Colombia's development strategy.

The National Plan for Human Rights Education is based on a set of ethical, legal, political, and cultural principles that are enshrined in the Colombian Constitution as well as in a series of other legal instruments and national policies. The new Constitution, which entered into force in 1991, sets forth the respect for human rights and advocates a more inclusive participation of minority groups. The 1994 General Law of Education, which came into effect pursuant to the 1991 Constitution, requires pupils and students to be educated in "justice, peace, democracy, solidarity (...)" (Article 14, d) and in "the social, ethical, moral and other values of human development" (Article 20, f)⁴³. Since

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ A. M. Velásquez, R. Jaramillo, J. A. Mesa, S. Diazgranados Ferráns (2017), "Citizenship Education in Colombia: Towards the Promotion of a Peace Culture", in *Civic and Citizenship*:

the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, and in compliance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the UN and its bodies have been collaborating with the Republic of Colombia in this regard. Despite the progress made, it was only in 2003 that the Ministry of Education launched the National Citizenship Competencies Programme, an ambitious programme whose aim is to enhance citizenship education, to promote the respect for diversity, to reduce and prevent violence, as well as to build a culture of peace and human rights. The Citizenship Competencies Programme is founded on 5 main pillars: (a) definition of citizenship learning goals; (b) development of a national citizenship test; (c) dissemination of good practices; (d) support to the regional and local Secretariats of Education in their guidance on school improvement plans; and (e) support to teachers through training programmes as well as pedagogical material⁴⁴. In the context of the present analysis, particularly relevant are pillars (a), (d), and (e).

It must be noted that, as a result of a high degree of decentralization of the national administration, Colombia has no national curriculum policies as such. Therefore, the Ministry of Education only provides schools and teachers with general guidelines, which are implemented according to the local needs. That is why, rather than defining a national citizenship curriculum, the Ministry of Education elaborated a set of citizenship learning goals, which are called “citizenship standards” and are divided into three categories: (i) peaceful coexistence; (ii) democratic participation and responsibility; and (iii) plurality, identity and valuing differences. All the above-mentioned competencies, which are framed within a human rights-based perspective, aim at developing the students’ capacity to establish social relationships founded on the values of equal dignity, solidarity, and respect for diversity, by means of a cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural approach, similar to the one advocated by UNESCO and IBE for the promotion of GCED⁴⁵. For the elaboration of these competencies, the Ministry of Education carried out consultations with a series of stakeholders, such as teachers from all levels of education, researchers, test developers, and others, in order to receive a more exhaustive feedback through a wide-sector approach. Beside the Citizenship Competencies Programme, the Ministry of Education also launched, in 2014, a Law of Peace Chair, which introduced peace education as a mandatory subject in all Colombian schools. Along these lines, the Ministry of Education initiated collaboration with

Theoretical Models and Experiences in Latin America, Moral Development and Citizenship Education (Vol. 12), Sense Publishers, Rotterdam.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

high-level universities in Colombia with the purpose of designing a Peace Curriculum for the long-term⁴⁶.

By reason of the aforementioned high level of decentralization, another main pillar of Colombia's Citizenship Competencies Programme consists in the Ministry's support for Secretariats of Education at the regional and local level, which, in turn, provide guidelines to all schools and more closely supervise their activities and administration. These guidelines not only concern the development and implementation of citizenship standards as such in the schools' curricula, but also aim at ameliorating the school climate at large, by helping teachers and administrative staff prepare their school improvement plans, for the ultimate purpose of disseminating good practices through case-studies and developing good human relationships, extracurricular activities as well as other peace initiatives. Also in the case of Colombia, therefore, a wide-school approach to achieve human rights and, in particular, equal citizenship rights through education is of paramount importance. Within this framework, the consolidation of a wide-sector approach was also essential, and took the form of collaboration agreements with both local and international actors, such as international organizations, non-governmental organizations, welfare agencies, churches, families, and other stakeholders.

In order to better promote equal citizenship rights within the classroom, finally, the Citizenship Competencies Programme provides for a series of tools, such as pre-service and in-service teacher trainings, continuing-education programmes, self-instructive pedagogical documents, workshops, and exchange fora for educational actors, in order for the latter to create appropriate learning environments and strategies. Within this context, National Citizenship fora have been established, wherein teachers, researchers, programme leaders, and other key stakeholders from different regions exchange experiences, ideas and good practices in order to create the so-called "*diálogo de saberes*" (knowledge dialogue)⁴⁷.

The scenario in Colombia is opposite to the one characterizing the case of Bahrain: the education system lacks a mandatory national curriculum due to administrative decentralization and school autonomy. On one hand, the high degree of autonomy granted to schools in the design of curricula allows local institutions to adapt the national guidelines to the particular needs of both individual students and communities. Each school community, therefore, may achieve the general goals set out by the Ministry of Education in a way

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

that respects the local social, economic and cultural environment⁴⁸. On the other hand, an excessive degree of autonomy may lead to a radicalization of local values and characteristics, losing track of the ultimate goal to promote equal citizenship rights and to value diversity as a source of richness in the context of a heterogeneous cultural, ethnic and linguistic environment, rather than as a source of exchange between different interests and values. Without prejudice to the need for valuing local differences and needs, one should bear in mind that the effective promotion of equal citizenship rights hinges, first and foremost, on a nation-wide effort to instil in all citizens, starting from an early age, a sense of belonging to a broader community, which identifies itself with the Nation. This goal may only be achieved, in the context of education, through the definition of mandatory national curricula rather than loose, general guidelines, which risk being extensively and ambiguously interpreted at the local level.

III. Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious country, which is home to a number of different ethnic groups including, *inter alia*, Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims. Gravely affected by nearly three decades of conflict, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka has been aiming, since the end of the civil war in May 2009, at enhancing the process of peacebuilding, reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country, in order to promote social cohesion and create a more inclusive society. To this end, the government of Sri Lanka has been directing its efforts towards the advancement of education as an essential tool to build a culture of peace, human rights, and respect for diversity.

The Ministry of Education has undertaken remarkable initiatives in this regard. The 1997 General Education Reforms introduced a new type of education, based on the promotion of human values, human rights, national cohesion, and democratic principles⁴⁹. In 2003, a list of proposals was made for the purpose of launching a National Policy Framework on General Education in Sri Lanka, including the establishment of a Sri Lankan identity through the promotion of national cohesion, and the acknowledgment of cultural diversity and pluralism as a richness rather than a source of conflict. In 2008, a series

⁴⁸ S. Riquelme Muñoz (n/d), *Global Citizenship Concepts in the Curriculum of Colombia: Analysis and Initial Recommendations*, Global Citizenship Education Curriculum Development and Integration – Phase I Under APCEIU-IBE Cooperation Project, APCEIU-IBE, p. 11.

⁴⁹ National Policy and A Comprehensive Framework of Actions on Education for Social Cohesion and Peace, Social Cohesion and Peace Education Unit of the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka, 2008, p. 1, available at: http://www.moe.gov.lk/tamil/images/publications/ESCP/peace_policy.pdf.

of education policy makers envisaged seven strategic areas to be developed in order to prepare a national policy on social cohesion and peace education: a) curriculum; b) teacher education; c) second national language; d) whole school culture; e) integrated schools; f) co-curricular activities; and g) research.

Against this backdrop, a Social Cohesion and Peace Education Unit was created within the Ministry of Education and was tasked with providing stronger assistance and guidance to the education sector, as part of the creation of a comprehensive national framework in this area⁵⁰. This process of cohesion-building in the educational sector was then boosted by the launching, in 2012, of National Action Plans on Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, formulated in collaboration with UNESCO. As also stated by Prof. Sunethra Karunaratne, *former Professor at the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka*, on the occasion of the Geneva Centre’s panel discussion on “*Human Rights: Enhancing Equal Citizenship Rights in Education*”, the Ministry of Education has been assisted, throughout this process, by other Ministries (for instance, by the Ministry of Finance and Planning), by a series of national institutions (such as the National Institute of Education, the Colleges of Education, etc.), as well as by several international organizations (notably UNESCO and UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations (Save the Children, Plan International, etc.).

Among the seven areas pointed out by the Ministry of Education, three are particularly relevant to the present analysis: a) curriculum; b) teacher education; and c) whole school culture. The other four may be considered as sub-categories of these 3 main development areas. In terms of curriculum, greater importance was attached to the existing *Competencies and Citizenship Education* and *Citizenship Education and Governance* curricula, as well as to the introduction of new peace- and democracy-related subjects. In particular, for the purpose of avoiding the exclusion of minorities, two initiatives were undertaken: i) the enhancement, in 2012, of a second national language policy (which was already inaugurated in 1999), with both Sinhala and Tamil as official languages, and English as the link language⁵¹; and ii) the revision of textbooks in order to counter misrepresentation or underrepresentation

⁵⁰ Aturupane H., Wikramanayake D. (2011), *South Asia: Human Development Sector, The Promotion of Social Cohesion Through Education in Sri Lanka*, Discussion Paper Series, 66042, World Bank, Report No. 46, pp. E2-E3, available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/264731468302393983/pdf/660420NWP00PUB0n0Sri0Lanka090402011.pdf>.

⁵¹ *Id.*, p. E5; Gunawardhana B. (2013), “Using Education to Build Peace for Tomorrow’s Sri Lanka”, in *SangSaeng*, Asia-Pacific Centre for Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), under the auspices of UNESCO), Spring 2013, p. 5.

of minority cultures, impart the importance of human values, and increase sensitivity to different cultural, religious and ethnic groups⁵².

With regard to the whole school culture, the need to build a school environment, which fosters peace, social cohesion, respect for human rights and collaborative relations within the school community, from the administrative staff to teachers, and from other relevant educational figures to both parents and students, was also asserted. An essential element of this whole-school approach is the development and implementation of both co-curricular and extra-curricular activities intending to strengthen intercultural understanding and dialogue, as well as the necessary skills to live in a democratic society. Examples of this type of activities are, among others, exchange programmes, student Parliaments, parents' committees, peace events, cultural shows, activity camps, dramas, debates, competitions, art exhibitions, and exchange programmes⁵³. Also, increasing integration between different schools in order to enhance exchanges among students from different cultural, religious and ethnical background has been considered as a fundamental practice for the purpose of reducing communication gaps, increasing intercultural dialogue, and developing a peaceful and collaborative mind-set among learners.

In this context, of paramount importance is also teacher education, with the purpose of allowing educational figures to instil, in a creative and interactive manner, concepts of peace, solidarity, and responsible citizenship in students of all ages and grades within the classroom. For this reason, both pre- and in-service training and workshops in social cohesion and civics education are provided to teachers, along with a series of instructive manuals and guidelines on these subjects.

In the case of Sri Lanka, also by reason of its long experience in this area, the country has been capable of integrating the educational model proposed by UNESCO and IBE-UNESCO within its educational system and to adapt it to its own particular social, cultural and ethnical context. The educational reforms that have been inaugurated in the 1990's have brought about the implementation of an education system whose main goal is building national solidarity and social cohesion, and fostering respect for cultural diversity. Nonetheless, the Sri Lankan case is not immune to criticism. First of all, although *Life Competencies and Civic Education* is a compulsory curriculum in grades 6-9, *Citizenship Education and Governance*, with its peace- and democracy-

⁵² Aturupane H., Wikramanayake D. (2011), *Op. Cit.*, p. E7.

⁵³ *Id.*, pp. E3-E4.

related subjects, is an optional curriculum for grades 10-11⁵⁴. An essential precondition for such an innovative system to flourish is the introduction of human rights as well as citizenship and civic education as compulsory subjects for all grades, in order to instil the values of human dignity, respect for diversity and responsible citizenship in pupils of all ages. Furthermore, according to available information⁵⁵, there is a lack of coordination between the bodies in charge of designing and organizing trainings and workshops for educators, leading to a fragmentation of teacher education, which is deemed to be an essential component of the national educational policy. Teachers play, in fact, a fundamental role in conveying messages of peace and human rights as well as in inculcating the values of respect for diversity, non-discrimination and social cohesion to learners within the classroom⁵⁶.

7. Conclusion

The enhancement of equal citizenship rights is an essential precondition for the development of inclusive, fair and just societies, founded on respect for diversity and on the promotion of a culture of peace. In this context, education stands out as an obvious building block, as well as the most fertile ground to sow and grow, in the minds of the up-coming generations, the seeds of human rights and, particularly, of equal citizenship rights.

As mentioned above, the enhancement of equal citizenship rights *tout court* is neither explicitly enshrined in international legal instruments nor is it directly contemplated by international plans of action and guidelines. The promotion of equal citizenship rights through education should therefore be considered in light of the broader aim to enhance human rights education at large. While promoting *equal* citizenship rights education, the international community has also made remarkable efforts to strengthen *global* citizenship education. The lessons learnt and best practices achieved in global citizenship education may thus serve as stimulating guidelines for the purpose of promoting equal citizenship rights at the national level.

Regardless of the specific aim pursued in the context of national educational strategies, according to UNESCO and IBE-UNESCO, any systemic educational change implies a three-phase process, which corresponds to three main interconnected levels of action (*a change in the national policies; a change in the school development plan; and a change in classroom methodologies*), to be achieved by means of a tripartite approach (*sector-wide approach, whole-*

⁵⁴ Aturupane H., Wikramanayake D. (2011), *Op. Cit.*, p. E6.

⁵⁵ For further information: *id.*, p. 22.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

school approach, and teacher training and education). In order to enhance education for equal citizenship rights, in the broader context of human rights education, one may draw inspiration from the above-mentioned model, also drawing upon the experience of Finland as an example of best practices in this regard. In addition, other countries, such as Bahrain, Colombia and Sri Lanka, could also provide a source of inspiration when addressing opportunities and challenges ahead in the promotion of equal citizenship rights and human rights through education.

In all three case studies, the surveys conducted have brought out fairly positive results. However, the impact of these newly implemented policies can only be assessed over the longer term. In the short-term, one can certainly affirm that all three countries have made non-negligible efforts to reform their education systems by integrating both equal citizenship rights and global citizenship. Furthermore, this reform process was, in all three cases, implemented through three main phases, aiming at promoting a change in the national policies, a change in the school development plan, and a change in classroom methodologies, as well as by means of the aforementioned tripartite approach.

It is worth reiterating, nevertheless, that “*one size does not fit all*” and that, therefore, there is no universal model applicable to all countries. Hence, the desired systemic educational change will be the result of specific contextual factors, such as (a) institutional, financial and human resources, (b) political commitment, and (c) vulnerability to inequality and discrimination. In the case studies examined in the present analysis, the tripartite model envisaged by UNESCO and IBE-UNESCO was adapted to the particular social, cultural, ethnical, and administrative context of each country. The importance of specificity in the approach to the promotion of equal citizenship rights through education in light of the prevailing social, economic and cultural context of each country, therefore, cannot be under-emphasised. Nonetheless, a fundamental precondition for such a reform to be effective is the involvement and commitment of ethnic, cultural and religious segments of society at all stages, from the design of national curricula to the implementation of teacher training. The ultimate goal is to have a more inclusive and democratic reform process, and to ensure that the voice of all be heard loud and clear.

The strong imprint of citizenship and human rights values in national curricula, as well as in other areas of education (such as the school environment and teacher training), is crucial to promote, in the longer term, social cohesion, citizenship responsibility and respect for diversity. Effectiveness will be conditional upon access to education being granted to all segments of society, without discrimination of any kind. If the right to education, which

is primarily enshrined in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to which all human beings are entitled, is not adequately fulfilled, then the promotion of human rights values through education risks becoming an isolated mantra and having no impact on the society as a whole. On one hand, the promotion of human rights values and, within this context, of equal citizenship rights through education has the potential to forge more inclusive and democratic societies by instilling in pupils and students of all ages the values of human dignity, respect for diversity, and solidarity. On the other, the right to education and, therefore, equal access of all citizens to education constitute a vital requirement for human rights education and equal citizenship rights education to flourish and achieve their goals. If it is unable to reach out to all social, cultural, ethnical, and religious components of society, whether individuals or groups, any effort towards the promotion of equal citizenship rights through education would be to no avail. The right and equal access *to* education, on one hand, and the promotion of human rights and equal citizenship rights *through* education, on the other, may be thus considered as two sides of the same coin, where each side represents, at once, both the end and the means to this end.

ANNEX
FULL STATEMENTS OF PANEL MEMBERS

Video Message by H. E. Dr. Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi
Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Bahrain

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Peace be upon you.*

I am pleased to express my sincere gratitude to my brothers at the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue for offering the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain the opportunity to present its pioneering project, entitled “Citizenship and Human Rights-promoting project”. I would like to thank them for their efforts in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As is stated in the National Action Charter, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, as well as in the Education Law, the Kingdom of Bahrain offers free compulsory education to all students, in addition to all relevant services, which are provided on a non-discriminatory basis.

As you all know, the Kingdom of Bahrain witnessed several cultural achievements throughout history. This allowed the people living in Bahrain to coexist in peace, tolerance and harmony, regardless of their gender or religion. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the Ministry of Education to preserve its cultural heritage, to promote it, and to instil it in the future generations of students.

The “Citizenship and Human Rights-promoting School Project” embodies these values of tolerance, coexistence, dialogue, and respect for diversity. After being implemented in a number of pilot schools, we found that this project had a very positive impact on our students’ behaviour. It created some sort of common understanding and peaceful coexistence, and promoted altruism, compassion, and solidarity.

We consider our students to be a precious human capital for the future, and believe that promoting the values of tolerance, dialogue, coexistence and respect for diversity is essential to live in our world. The Kingdom of Bahrain thus aims at presenting, by means of this project, its pioneering experience in this regard, using education wisely to consolidate and instil these values and concepts in future generations, which will bear the onus of spreading more peace and love in the world.

Opening remarks by H. E. Dr. Hanif Hassan Ali Al Qassim
Chairman of the Geneva Centre's Board of Management

*Excellencies,
 Distinguished Panellists,
 Honourable Participants,*

As Chairman of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue, it is a pleasure for me to open today's panel debate on the subject of "*Human rights: Enhancing equal citizenship rights in education*". Out of the numerous panel debates the Geneva Centre has held, today's event lies closest to the core objective of the Centre, namely to enhance global dialogue and to ensure respect for human rights through education and learning.

Today we are convening this panel debate with the UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva, IBE-UNESCO and the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain. I would like to thank the Ambassador of Bahrain, **Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri**, and the Director of the UNESCO Geneva Liaison Office, **Mr. Abdulaziz Almuzaini**, for their support. I am grateful that you have joined forces with us to raise awareness on a topic that has the potential to transform societies and, in particular, to promote social harmony.

We are most honoured to have on our panel some of the most renowned experts in the field of education, who promise an insightful afternoon of discussions ahead.

In 1996, the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, spearheaded by the French politician Jacques Delors, presented a seminal report that has significantly influenced our understanding of the transformative power of education in promoting social cohesion and diversity. This report, entitled "*Learning: The Treasure Within*", was a catalyst for promoting social inclusion and active citizenship curricula for "*mutual understanding, peaceful interchange*" and "*harmony*". The report proposed a focus on educating youth on "learning to live together", and this is the essence of today's discussion.

Article 26, paragraph 2, of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that education "*shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace*". The power of education in enhancing cooperation between nations has contributed to creating a more peaceful and inclusive world. With the current trends toward heightened inter-religious tensions, it is time to once again focus on education as a path to promoting human rights and inclusive citizenship.

The surge of populism has given rise to increased xenophobia, bigotry and online hate campaigns. The phenomenon of “*fake news*” is also spurring the rise of forces feeding on caricatures and misleading generalizations about religions, which generate simplistic solutions to challenges deriving from the adverse effects of globalization. Diversity and solidarity are being replaced by social exclusion, discrimination and marginalization.

It is of vital importance that our education systems address those misconceptions and create mechanisms for participatory citizenship in which we, as national as well as global citizens, learn to live together in peace, justice and harmony.

Inclusive citizenship through education enables diversity to become a force for social progress. We can look to model countries to learn from their successes. Finland has an impressive track-record integrating human rights and citizenship education in its core curricula. In addition, the impressive efforts of Bahrain, Colombia and Sri Lanka in promoting non-violence through education are other remarkable examples to be studied.

In their attempts to restore the social and moral fabric that had been affected by inter-communal strife, they have used education and social inclusion to promote harmonious relationships within their nations. The lessons learned from these countries - that will be presented in more detail by the panellists - will enable us to better understand the role of education in building lasting peace. It is an important building block in creating an egalitarian mind-set that helps overcome prejudice and misconceptions. Education has the power of uniting people regardless of religious beliefs, denominations and value systems.

It is undeniable that the first step towards social harmony and shared citizenship starts with educating our youth. Today, we unite our forces to promote education as a vector for inclusive citizenship and societal harmony. With this focus on the role of education, I hope our efforts today will represent a successful step forward.

I would like to remind the audience that the Geneva Centre will hold a world conference next year on the theme of “*Religion and Beliefs, Joining Forces to Enhance Equal Citizenship Rights*”. The objective of this conference is to foster greater mutual understanding and tolerance between people of different faiths and beliefs through education. Your contributions today will be integrated into the concept note of this world conference.

I thank you all and look forward to learning from your deliberations.

Opening remarks by H. E. Mr. Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri

*Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations
in Geneva*

(Translated from Arabic)

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Gracious

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peace be upon you.

First of all, I am pleased to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the staff members of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights and Global Dialogue, for organizing this important international symposium. This panel debate aims at presenting a number of successful experiences in the field of citizenship and human rights education, including the experience of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Bahrain's wise leadership constituted, since the beginning of the last century, an essential engine for human development and civic education in order to build "*a balanced self*" and to live together in tolerance and in peace.

In recent years, the Kingdom of Bahrain has taken long strides in the areas of social and economic development and took the lead in the "Education for All Development Index", at both the Arab and international levels. This is the result of the great steps the country has taken towards achieving "*education for all*" as a genuine human right, against the backdrop of Bahrain's commitment to achieve the "Education for All" goals and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals ahead of schedule.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since His Majesty King Hamad ben Issa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, came to power, His Majesty has been laying the foundation for the advancement of human rights, so that the Kingdom of Bahrain could become one of the leading countries in ensuring human rights for all without discrimination. The aim is to define the basic components of Bahraini civil society and to guarantee fundamental freedoms as the foundations of both family and society. This can be achieved by constitutionalizing all basic human rights, as well as through the promulgation of national legislation governing the achievement of human rights for all citizens, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in addition to signing further agreements and treaties that enshrine these rights in various fields and at all levels. In this way, the Kingdom moves steadily and vigorously towards strengthening the rule of law.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2011, while all indicators in the Kingdom of Bahrain were pointing to its success in the field of development and human rights (according to international reports), the Kingdom was exposed to a real, dangerous, sudden and unexpected threat to its security and stability and to its unique model of coexistence and peace, through a deliberate attempt to overturn the existing legislation and values agreed upon by the society. This was by resorting to violence and terrorism, transgressing the law, disseminating destructive ideas and appeals to endanger civil peace, and undermining the Bahraini model of co-existence, which is known for its tolerance and has characterized the lifestyle of many generations over the centuries. Sectarian propaganda posed a grave threat to both the people and the nation, with their discriminatory slogans aiming at dividing the society and preparing for unprecedented types of civil strife, based on an arbitrary viewpoint that classifies compatriots as an “enemy” that must be eliminated, fighting in this way against the idea of citizenship and coexistence.

That being said, it was necessary to work on the political, social, cultural, human rights, legislative and media levels to restore space for tolerance, which was restricted by this propaganda and related slogans. The aim was to promote citizenship, human rights values and tolerance, by resorting to education, as the idea of peace is anchored first and foremost in the minds of people.

We hope that the presentation that the Kingdom of Bahrain is honored to give today at this esteemed forum will provide a brief overview of an important educational experience, based on the transformation of schools into an integrated educational space, conducive to building citizenship and to promoting human rights and tolerance in order to enhance national unity.

I renew my thanks and appreciation to all. May peace be upon you.

Opening remarks by Mr. Abdulaziz Almuzaini

Director of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva

Your Excellency Dr. Hanif Al Qassim, Chairman of the Geneva Centre's Board of Management,

Your Excellency Ambassador Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations Office in Geneva,

Ambassador Idriss Jazairy, Executive Director of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue, Moderator of today's discussion,

Distinguished experts and panellists,

Dear participants,

First of all, I would like to commend the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue for taking the initiative of organizing this important event on the role of equal citizenship rights in education. The UNESCO Geneva Office is pleased to support this welcome initiative.

The UNESCO 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education, which affirms the fundamental principle of equality of opportunities, is the first legally binding international instrument that lays down the core elements of the fundamental right to education.

In times of fragmentation, equal access to education can open vital spaces for inclusion, reconciliation and dialogue involving all young people from all sectors of society, laying the foundations for mutual understanding and lasting peace.

In societies experiencing profound transformation, social divisions, crisis and conflict, ensuring universal and equal access to education is an urgent priority, but it is not enough.

All around the world, young people today require quality education capable of equipping them to deal with the challenges of the 21st Century, and nowhere this is of greater resonance than in societies experiencing inter-communal or civil strife.

Human Rights and Citizenship Education have an important role to play in this respect. Quality education grounded in human rights and citizenship means that rights are implemented and promoted throughout the whole education system and in all learning environments – for all girls and boys.

We need to empower young women and men to become active citizens in facing and resolving global challenges, and in contributing to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world. This requires helping learners develop critical thinking, empathy, and respect for diversity.

This requires, in particular, providing young people with a positive sense of identity and belonging, and to foster mutual understanding and respect among youth, including through interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

This is the spirit that drives UNESCO's action on Global Citizenship Education and Human Rights Education, enshrined within the Global Education 2030 Agenda, whose roadmap is the Education 2030 Framework for Action, led by UNESCO.

I look forward to learning from the case studies and good practices during today's session, which will provide valuable insights for us all as we continue to work together to achieve peaceful, just and inclusive development through education.

Thank you.

Welcoming remarks by Ambassador Idriss Jazairy

Executive Director of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue

Let Difference Beget Not Division, But a Celebration of Diversity

*Excellencies,
Distinguished Panellists,
Honourable Participants,*

The Geneva Centre celebrates diversity both across borders and domestically, diversity whose welcome is an indicator of the prevalence of human rights.

Yet current trends tend to be in denial of this vision. A toxic discourse of hatred, stereotyping and discrimination is gaining ground. It is amplified by the renewed hijacking of religion for political gain. The ultimate outcome of current trends is to lead to inward-looking policies and to social regression.

Greater equality in citizenship rights can reverse these trends. It will reduce the need for protective measures for distinct social components of nations that one refers to somewhat embarrassingly as “minorities”. When the latter perceive that the State does not make a priority of ensuring the fulfilment of their equal citizenship rights, they tend to resort to and play-up sub-identities. The absence of a State providing inclusive protection of the population thus exacerbates societal cleavages. It further erodes the feeling of national unity and belonging. Vulnerable social components may become pretexts for exclusion and discrimination. So they, quite legitimately, seek representation in the political process to claim special protective measures. This further aggravates intercommunity rifts and can lead to violence and conflict.

The hoped-for evolution of perceptions of difference from the fostering of division to the celebration of diversity unfolds in three phases. The first phase covers the short-term. It revolves around policy implementation measures that can be taken at the domestic level, to achieve greater equality of citizenship rights. The second phase is medium-term and it has to do with ensuring the adoption and implementation of national and international policy instruments for improved protection of vulnerable social components. The third phase focuses on education.

The Geneva Centre proposes today to focus on the third phase. This has to do with giving prominence to the vital role played by education in thwarting the effects of division and of the fear of the “Other”.

Education for equal citizenship rights contributes to the required attitudinal change over time. It does so by instilling a sense of solidarity already in pupils and students of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. It can encourage youths to move beyond the biases and preconceptions that they may have inherited.

Education towards equal citizenship rights broadens the debate on human rights and global citizenship, taking the important additional step of transitioning from the global level to the domestic level. It is crucial that the lessons learned and best practices achieved in global citizenship education become operational also at the national level. This is particularly the case for countries emerging from conflict or civil strife.

The discussion will concern the case studies of three countries that have faced obstacles in addressing vulnerable social components, and have subsequently taken steps to introduce education on human rights and equal citizenship in their national curricula. The cases of Bahrain, Sri Lanka and Colombia will thus be discussed. The discussion will be enriched by the valuable contribution of practitioners who have had first-hand experience with this issue. The Finnish experience will be discussed as a success story in order to draw lessons and make the most of best practices.

I conclude with these words from Mahatma Gandhi that make a very good opening for our discussion today: *“If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children.”*

Statement by Dr. Ana María Velasquez

Associate Professor at Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia

Colombia has faced more than five decades of political armed conflict, which has its roots in, among others, social inequalities, poverty, restricted political participation, and the absence of the government in marginalized areas. This has left a history of human rights violations, a culture of legitimization of violence and social exclusion, and a mindset based on retaliation attitudes and distrust in the political institutions and system. Last year, Colombians regained hope in the possibility of reconstructing the country thanks to the peace treaty signed with the FARC, one of the largest guerrilla groups.

As a result of this, high expectations have been placed on education as a means to face this post-conflict scenario, by preparing society to build a more peaceful, inclusive and democratic system. According to the National Ministry of Education, education may play at least three important roles to contribute to the post-conflict challenges. First, it may help to reduce the inequality gap by increasing the access to education of those who did not have an institution to attend, and of those who have left the system. Second, through education, children and youth may learn to interact within a more restorative system, where reparation, forgiveness and reconciliation with those who have been considered enemies is possible. Third, education is a key factor to help the whole population to better understand the past by building a historical memory that, in turn, may help society to prevent the perpetuation or relapse of violent conflict, and to construct a more pacific, inclusive, democratic and sustainable future.

Foreseeing this scenario, in 2004 the Ministry of Education launched the National Citizenship Competencies program, which is aimed at creating a culture of peace and human rights defense. Peace education can be understood from different perspectives. According to Solomon (2002), these perspectives include: a change in the mindset; the healing of the relationship between former enemies; the development of attitudes and skills; the defense of human rights; the promotion of a culture of peace and sustainability. Galtung (1969), on the other hand, proposes two perspectives: 1) a negative peace view, which focusses on the absence of direct violence through the prevention of aggression and discrimination, as well as on the promotion of peaceful conflict resolution and on the support of reparation, forgiveness and reconciliation of former enemies; and 2) a positive peace view, which is aimed at promoting social justice and at eradicating structural violence, mainly by means of equity, inclusion and democracy.

The Citizenship Competencies Program in Colombia regards the citizen as an

individual who develops constructive and pacific relationships with others, reducing direct violence, but who also actively and pacifically participates in the promotion of change in order to improve the social conditions of his or her proximal and distal communities. Therefore, the program adopts the view of a citizen who works towards promoting both negative and positive peace, in the spirit of enhancing the recognition and the defense of human rights.

The National Citizenship Program is a curricular innovation that includes: the explicit formulation of citizenship learning goals; the development and periodic administration of a national citizenship competencies test; teachers' training; support for the development and evaluation of citizenship education programs; and the development of pedagogical materials for citizenship education.

It should be taken into account that Colombia has one of the most decentralized curricula in Latin America, where the Ministry of Education only provides guidelines to schools and teachers in order to implement the constitutional mandate. In this way, schools can decide for themselves the amount of time and the specific content to be allocated to each subject, as long as they comply with the general guidelines set out by the Ministry. Therefore, it is in the context of this autonomous educational system that the Ministry proposed and implemented the Citizenship Competencies Program.

Here, I am going to focus on the analysis of the learning goals, looking at how a human rights-based perspective is included as a transversal topic across these objectives, and then at how these objectives can be articulated within the Global Citizenship Education program proposed by UNESCO.

As I mentioned, the National Citizenship Competencies program is an innovative curriculum formulating learning objectives. These are known as standards, which are comprised of citizenship competencies. We understand citizenship competencies as a set of cognitive, emotional, communicative and integrative competencies that, coordinated among themselves, along with knowledge and attitudes, make it possible for an individual or a social group to exercise their citizenship within a local, national or global community.

These citizenship competencies are framed within a human rights perspective as they offer the basic tools for each person to learn how to respect, defend and promote fundamental human rights, relating them to everyday situations where these may be infringed because of our own deeds or by those of others. In these cases, citizenship competencies represent the necessary skills and knowledge to: relate to others in a constructive and peaceful manner; participate in democratic decision-making processes and endeavours; value cultural, ethnic,

gender and social differences, and learn how to enrich ourselves with them. These standards are formulated for five age groups or cycles.

In general terms, we refer to “peaceful coexistence” as the capacity to establish good social relationships based on justice, empathy, tolerance, solidarity and respect for others. The expression “democratic participation and responsibility” refers to the capacity and willingness to lead and take part in collective and participative decision-making processes. “Plurality, identity and enrichment with differences” are understood as the recognition of equal dignity in all human beings, valuing the characteristics of others who are different.

For each one of the age groups or cycles, there is a set of specific standards. For the first cycle, which includes children from first to third grade, we have the following patterns:

- 1) I identify maltreatment situations occurring around me (towards myself or others). I know who to ask for help and protection.
- 2) I show displeasure when I or someone else in the classroom am/is not listened to or taken into account. I express my displeasure without being aggressive.
- 3) I value similarities and differences among people close to me.

For the last cycle, which goes from tenth to eleventh grade, we have the following patterns:

- 1) I critically analyze the human rights situation in Colombia and in the world. I propose alternatives for their promotion and defense.
- 2) I express empathy for groups or people whose rights have been violated. I propose actions to provide them with support.
- 3) I understand that respect for difference does not mean accepting that other people or groups violate human rights or constitutional norms.

Concerning learning objectives, they include safety, participation, equality and freedom from discrimination, which integrate knowledge, value and defense of human rights. In addition, these standards incorporate different types of competencies: emotional, cognitive, communicative, and integrative competencies.

If we compare these competencies with the Global Citizenship Education program by UNESCO, we find some similarities. What we see as communicative competencies could be integrated into what UNESCO regards as behavioural competencies.

As cognitive competencies, we have perspective-taking, critical thinking and

assessment of consequences, which are of course articulated on the basis of specific citizenship-related knowledge and skills. As concerns socio-emotional competencies, they may include the constructive use of certain emotions, such as indignation, and the development of empathic responses. As for the behavioural competencies, we include active listening and assertiveness, which are fundamental to develop a constructive dialogue with others and participate in the construction of a more inclusive, equal and peaceful society.

I would like to conclude by showing some examples of how we think the Colombian National Competencies Curriculum is being further integrated within the Global Citizenship Competencies perspective.

We are working along two tracks. First, we have integrated some of the GCED competencies in the last grades of high-school curricula, but we need to extend them also to earlier grades.

Second, we see a potential for expanding the way we treat some of the topics related to the aforementioned competencies. For example, in the cognitive domain, we can reinforce the analysis of Universal Human Rights and how they are being violated, not only in our own socio-political context, but also abroad.

As for the socio-emotional domain, we know that empathy may be developed easily towards those to whom we are close. Nevertheless, we need to make greater efforts to amplify the social systems towards which children and youth are empathic, reaching those whom we do not know, who live in remote places and who belong to different cultures.

Finally, in the behavioural domain, we see great potential in the possibility of fostering children's and youth awareness of the social exclusion of individuals or groups from other cultures. We think we can take advantage of virtual social networks to promote the defense of rights of those in disadvantaged conditions. And, of course, we need to make more efforts not only to fight for social justice today, but also for future generations, by analysing and taking action to preserve our natural resources and to promote a sustainable world.

Statement by Prof. Sunethra Karunaratne

Former Professor at University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

Historical Background



Figure I: Location of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean

The history of Sri Lanka begins around 30,000 years ago, when the island was first inhabited. After being ruled by 181 monarchs, Sri Lanka disestablished the monarchy in 1815. The country was colonized by three different groups of Europeans, namely the Portuguese (1505-1658), the Dutch (1640-1796) and the British (1815-1948). Direct colonial rule ended with the introduction of universal franchise in 1931.

The independence was granted on 4 February 1948, but the country remained a Dominion of the British Empire (Parliament of Sri Lanka, 1978). To obtain the independence of Sri Lanka, Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims leaders worked in unison. The country was named “Ceylon” until it became the Democratic Socialist Republic in 1972 and its name was changed into Sri Lanka. The Constitution was promulgated by the National State Assembly on 7 September 1978 and is still in force today. An executive presidency model was introduced in 1978. The constitution set forth an independent judiciary as well as fundamental rights and guarantees, which provide for any aggrieved person to invoke the Supreme Court for any violation of these rights. In light of the Constitution, everyone is entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. All persons are equal before the law and cannot be discriminated on

the basis of race, religion, caste, sex, political opinion and place of birth.

Since September 1978, the Constitution has been formally amended 18 times (Gunasekera, 2006). In 1987, with the 13th amendment, some of the powers and functions exercised by the central government were devolved to the nine provinces of the country (Figure II).

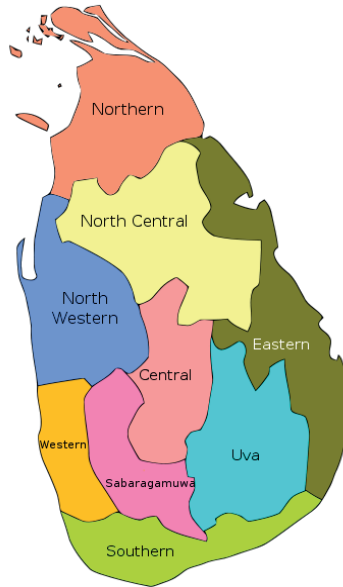


Figure II: Map of Sri Lanka with nine provinces

Each Member of Parliament is elected by proportional representation for a five-year term by universal suffrage. These members are elected from major political parties. Out of 225, 196 members of the Parliament are elected from 22 electoral districts and the other 29 are selected from the national lists allocated to the parties (and independent groups) in proportion to their share of the national vote. The President of the country has the power to summon, suspend, prorogue or terminate a legislative session and to dissolve the Parliament (Parliament of Sri Lanka, 2017, www.president.gov.lk/parliament).

Sri Lanka became a member of the United Nations in 1955. It is a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement and holds the membership of the Commonwealth, the SAARC, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, and the Colombo Plan. Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic country. The percentage of the different ethnic groups present in the country are as follows: 74% Sinhalese, 12.6% Sri Lankan Tamils, 5.5% Indian Tamils, 7.1% Sri Lankan Moors, and 0.8% other ethnic groups (Grade 8 textbook, Life Competencies and Citizenship Education - LCCE, Part II, p.40) (Figure III).

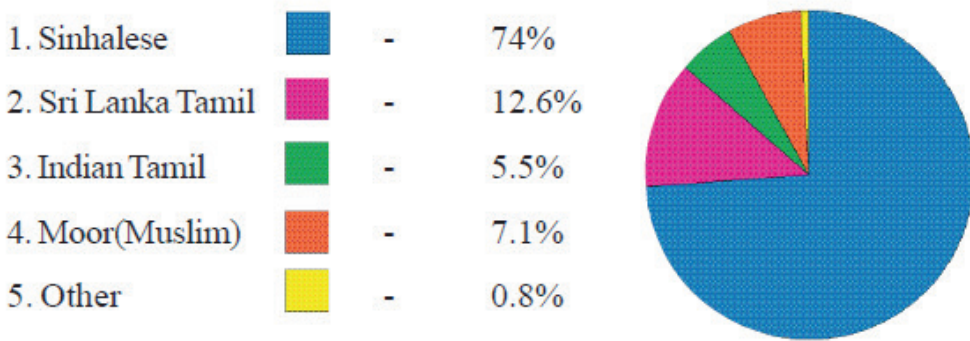


Figure III: Ethnic groups in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a multi-religious country (Figure IV) with 73.7% Buddhists, 10.9% Hindus, 7.6% Muslims, 6.2% Christians and 1.6% others (Grade 8 textbook, Life Competencies and Citizenship Education – LCCE, Part II, p.41).

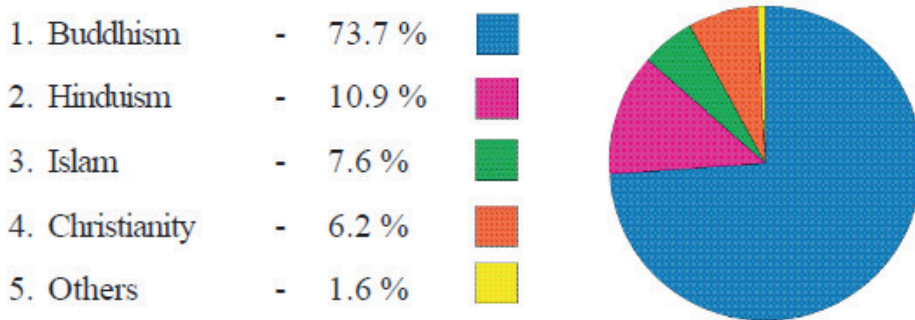


Figure IV: Religious groups in Sri Lanka

Ethnic Conflict

The two major ethnic groups in Sri Lanka are Sinhalese and Tamils. An ethnic conflict broke out between these two groups on 23 July 1983 and ended on 18 May 2009. This ethnic conflict has many root causes and consequences that are closely inter-linked. However, given its complexity, it should not be assumed that these causes are part of linear historical processes where one event led to another. Often, many of the issues that may be regarded as root causes arose within a single but extended context and just as often simultaneously.

The roots of this conflict lie in the British colonial rule, when the country was known as Ceylon. The British created segregation among Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims in the school system according to race and social class. They provided incentives for the English speaking elite and for those who

converted to Christianity to study in English medium schools (Colenso, 2005). At present Sinhala (74%) and Tamil (18%) are the official languages, and English is considered to be the link language. There was initially little tension among Sri Lanka's two largest ethnic groups, when Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, a Tamil, was appointed as representative of the Sinhalese as well the Tamils in the national legislative council. In 1919 major Sinhalese and Tamil political organizations united to form the Ceylon National Congress, under the leadership of Arunachalam, to push the colonial government for more constitutional reforms (World Bank, 2015). Although some Tamils believed that Arunachalam was favouring Sinhalese, no conflict arose between Sinhalese and Tamils, who continued to work together. In 1956, the "Sinhala Only Bill" announced that Sinhala would be the official language of Sri Lanka, and Buddhism the official religion. Although this legislation was intended to protect the educational rights of Sinhala Buddhists, it prevented the Sinhalese from learning Tamil as schools were linguistically segregated. In April 1971, a Sinhala terrorist group, "Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna" (JVP), launched some protests to overthrow the Government, calling for equality among the rich and the poor. Nonetheless, this attempt was not successful. Then again, in the 80s, a second insurgency advocated by JVP arose, calling for equal opportunities. During the conflict in the 80s, the Government was fighting on two fronts: on one hand, in the North and East, in the context of the above-mentioned ethnic conflict; and, on the other, in the South, against Sinhala terrorists.

Conflict period

To a certain extent, ethnicity and religion also have a regional basis, which is a significant reason why the Tamil militancy had a strong geographical dimension.

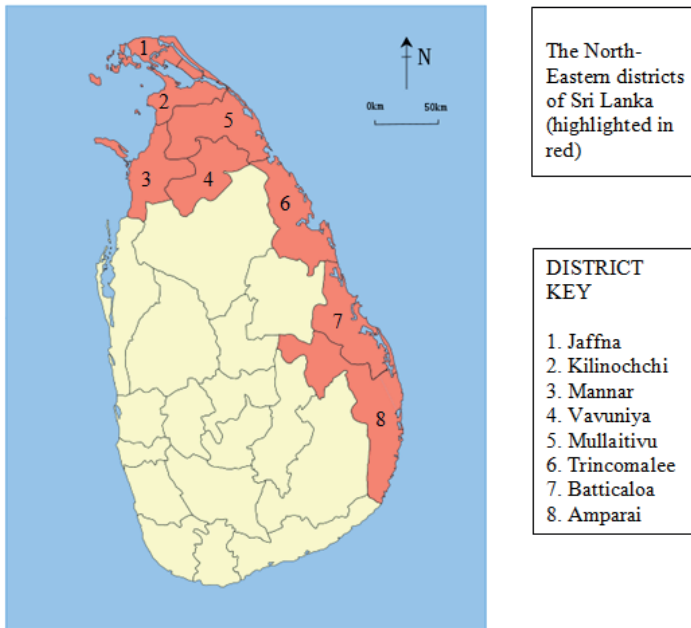


Figure V: Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka

There was an intermittent insurgency against the government promoted by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (the LTTE, also known as the Tamil Tigers), which fought to create an independent Tamil State called “Tamil Eelam” in the North and the East of the island. Out of all ethnic and religious groups, Tamil Hindus predominated in the northern Province and maintained a significant presence in the eastern Province (Figure V.) Tamil Tigers became institutionalized after 1990s.

During the 30-year conflict, there were several terrorist groups, but the LTTE was the only one strong enough to exercise its power both in the North and the East of the country. There were conflicts between Tamils and Muslims, and the LTTE was involved in the ethnic cleansing of Muslims in the Northern Jaffna peninsula. On 12 August 2005, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, a Tamil who was highly respected by foreign diplomats and who had been sharply critical of the LTTE, was assassinated, allegedly by a LTTE sniper. His assassination led to the marginalization of the LTTE from the international community, and is generally considered to be the moment in which the LTTE lost international moral support.

Post conflict period

Since the end of the ethnic conflict in 2009, Sri Lanka has experienced a particularly rapid economic growth, becoming the fastest growing country in

South Asia in 2011. The country has been rapidly developing and urbanizing, with infrastructure projects driving economic growth, and taking advantage of its strategic location along an international sea route (World Bank, 2013). The country was able to increase its 24.4 USD billion GDP to 49.1 in 2010. This had an impact on reducing the percentage of poverty from 15.2 in 2005 to 7.6 in 2010 (MoE, 2013).

Measures undertaken in the field of education

Despite the rapid economic growth, it was a very difficult task to heal the mindset of the people who were affected by the conflict, as they had undergone psychological stress, fearing to be caught or killed, and to live with no shelter, food and water. In this context, education constituted a powerful tool to shape the minds and hearts of people for the purpose of achieving peace and social cohesion.

The government emphasized the need for developing the competencies and technological skills required for the economic and social development of people, with the aim of creating a high-quality and student-friendly education system that contributes to a knowledge-based society (Sedere, 2010). At the Ministry level, several changes were made. A Peace Education unit and a Citizenship Education unit were formed, along with a Social Cohesion and Peace Education Unit (SCPEU) (Ministry of Education, 2008). The National Institute of Education (NIE), the Colleges of Education (NCoEe) and the Teacher Education unit also planned and implemented several programmes. University students and staff conducted various types of camps to provide children with enjoyable opportunities in order to develop their morale and to enhance their interest in education. Organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, Save the Children, GIZ, Plan Sri Lanka and the National Peace Council assisted in many ways to help the displaced children.

Seven strategic areas were considered in the development process of the national education system, namely curriculum, teacher-education, second national language, whole school culture, integration, co-curriculum and research. The education system in Sri Lanka consists of: a) primary education, from grade 1-5; b) junior secondary education, from grade 6-9; c) senior secondary education, from grade 10-11; and d) collegiate, from grade 12-13 (Presidential Task Force, 1997). Sri Lanka provides free education from grade 1 to the university undergraduate level.

Curriculum

The Ministry of Finance and Planning in 2010 published a document entitled *“The emerging wonders of Asia: Mahinda Chinthana, vision for the future”*.

It highlights the need to create a “Knowledge Hub” to produce a “total child” with an array of multiple skills to face the challenges of life in the modern world successfully. This child should possess the skills of critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making. The central theme that runs through the curriculum is the development of a patriotic citizen for which it is required to have a student-centred pedagogy with activity-based tasks to construct knowledge and develop skills and attitudes collaboratively. The national goals and common competencies have been therefore formulated to build up such a patriotic citizen. The education reforms included revising textbooks, eliminating bias and including national minorities as legitimate citizens of Sri Lanka (Perera, Wijetunge, & Balasooriya, 2004). In collaboration with both international organizations and NGOs (such as DFID, UNICEF, and Save the Children), efforts were made by the Government of Sri Lanka to bring about multi-culturalism through civic education (MoE, 2008).

There have been many changes in the curricula for the junior secondary level. New subjects were introduced in the context of formal curricula. From grade 6 to 9, life competencies and citizenship education were introduced as a new subject. Civic education was introduced within a new curriculum for grades 8-11. In grade 11, textbooks currently present a separate chapter on Human Rights. The textbook for grade 8, entitled “*Life Competencies and Citizenship Education*”, Part I, reflects ways of preventing conflicts (Figure VI). It instructs teachers to use different teaching methods, such as drama, to raise students’ interest in learning and retaining knowledge for a long time.

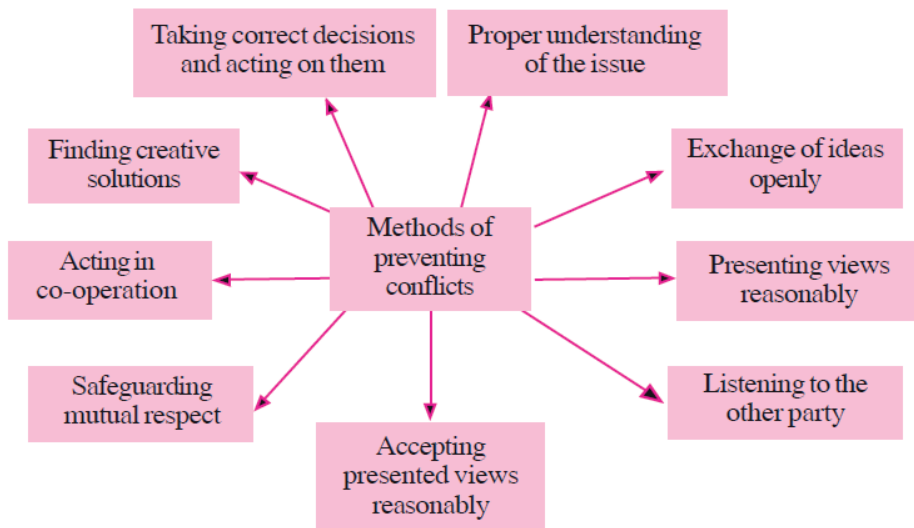


Figure VI: Methods of preventing conflicts

Source: Grade 8, *Life Competencies and Citizenship Education, Part I* (p. 42)

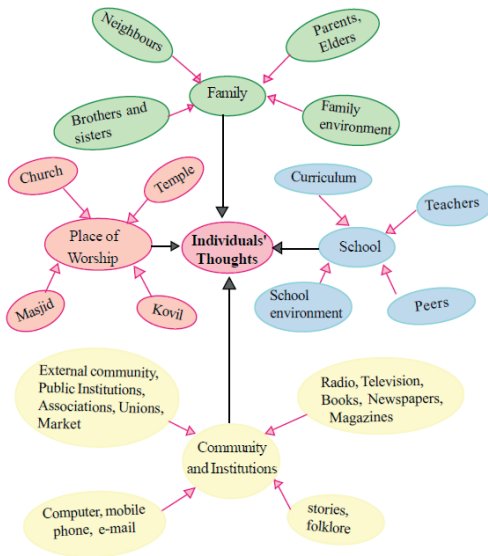


Figure VII: Inculcating good thoughts
 Source: Grade 8, Life Competencies and Citizenship Education, Part I (p. 13)

Textbooks are published by the Educational Publications Department according to the syllabus developed by the National Institute of Education (NIE) and are given free of charge to students. The NIE has the exclusive authority to develop curricula and teacher instruction manuals. It is necessary to incite children to perform their duties within their families, at school, and within religious institutions, and to help them in community activities (Figure VII).

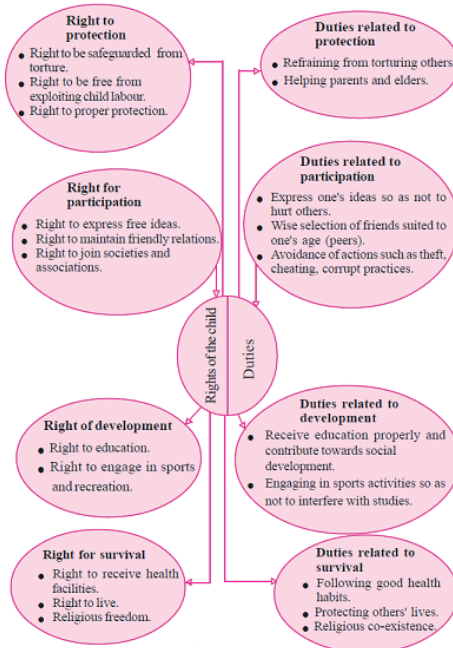


Figure VIII: Child rights and duties
 Source: Grade 8, Life Competencies and Citizenship Education, Part II (p. 31)

By knowing their duties and rights, children learn democratic features that could be observed in school and beyond. Figure VIII shows the duties and rights of children relating to protection, participation, development and survival.

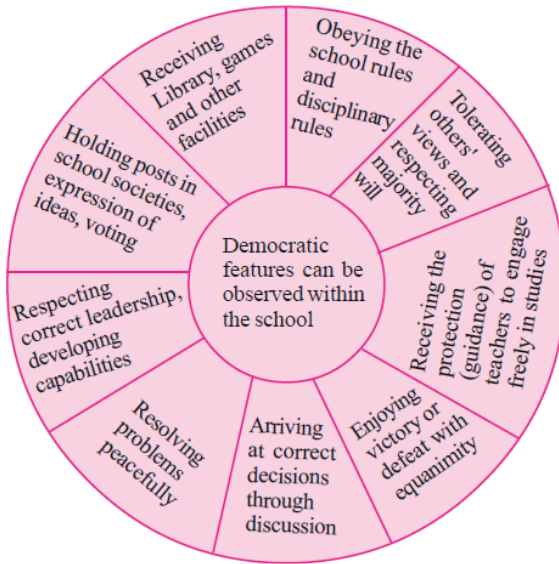


Figure IX: Democratic features within the school
 Source: Grade 8, *Life Competencies and Citizenship Education, Part II* (p. 21)

It is the teacher's role to let students work in groups, to draw a list of democratic features that could be observed in the school (Figure IX), as well as to share this list with other groups. Children learn their duties and rights due to their involvement in several activities, such as role-plays, debates, posters-making, and presentations.

Education is a right to which all children are entitled and it is their duty and obligation to engage in educational activities with enthusiasm, in order to serve the society as good citizens (G7 textbook, *Life Competencies and Citizenship Education*, p.36). They should realize the importance of living in a multicultural society, obeying the laws and leading to a democratic way of life (Figure X).



Figure X: Characteristics of a democratic way of life

Source: Grade 8, Life competencies and citizenship education Part II (p. 21)

Teacher Education

Instruction manuals for teachers have been prepared by the NIE and include several activities, so that students can engage in alternative learning activities. In-service sessions have been also conducted in order to train teachers and develop their competencies to build up peace among students and to allow them to get familiar with their duties and rights. Teachers should be able to develop positive attitudes in students through different types of teaching strategies and activities. Collaboration during these activities helps children interiorize the idea that they are all Sri Lankans, regardless of the fact that they belong to different ethnic, religious and cultural groups. Teachers need to play a bigger role in developing this positive attitude towards collaboration, peace, social cohesion and citizenship values.

Second National Language

Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to be involved in various activities in order to build up the concept of working together. The importance of studying a second national language emerged in order to improve communication and interaction between the two main ethnic groups: Sinhala for Tamils; and Tamil for Sinhalese. Although it is required to teach a second national language in all government schools, due to the shortage of language teachers this is not always the case. In this context, English is considered to be the link language between different ethnic groups.

Whole school culture

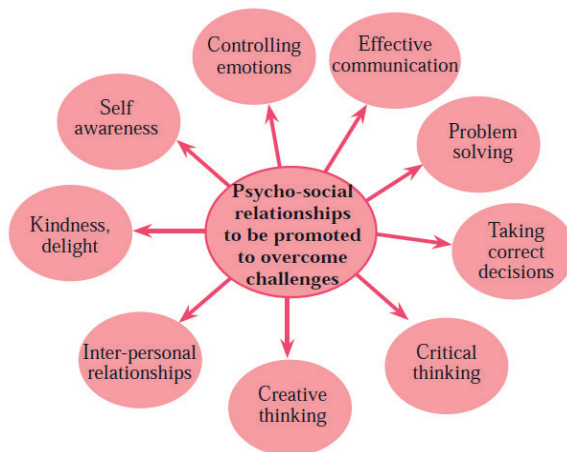
In a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural country, there is the need to develop a culture of peace in the whole school system. Our schools have parent-teacher associations, past pupils' associations, as well as school development societies, and many community members work as teaching aides. Efforts have been made to develop a whole school culture so that there would be collaboration and cooperativeness among staff members and students.

Integration

Sri Lanka has a system of school clusters where a resourceful school is connected to several schools in the region. Cluster schools get the benefit of sharing playgrounds, school bands, as well as special teachers. This kind of sharing is needed to develop patriotic skills in promoting peace in the country.

Co-curricular activities

Co-curricular activities help promote psycho-social relationships to overcome challenges, as shown in Figure XI.



*Figure XI: Psycho-social relationships to be promoted to overcome challenges
Source: Grade 8, Civic Education (p. 112)*

Children are very enthusiastic to participate in co-curricular activities. In the “Pals of two cities” programme, children go from the North to the South, and from the South to the North, and spend seven days enjoying the differences among them in terms of behavioral patterns, food habits, and religious rituals. These two groups belong to two ethnic, religious and cultural groups. Before they leave, they always share their personal experience during the exchange programme and express their high appreciation for the programme itself. The SCPEU also encouraged schools to have their own ‘Student Parliament’ for the purpose of learning about parliamentary procedures and political debates, and for improving public speaking skills. Cultural events and shows, activity camps, debates, dramas, competitions, and exhibitions are also conducted for students in order for them to work in harmony (Aturupane & Wikramanayake, 2011).

Research

By 2019, ten years will have passed from the end of the conflict and there will be a need to assess the effectiveness of the programmes that have been undertaken to develop collaboration, peace, social cohesion and citizenship. An analysis of textbooks is needed to find out how the content presented helps in developing peace, citizenship values and awareness of human rights. It is necessary to evaluate teaching and learning measures, as well as the effectiveness of co-curricular activities in building peace and citizenship values. As it is already understood that the implementation of a second national language is not satisfactory, there is also a need to investigate ways to improve the teaching and learning of this second language.

Conclusions

Engagement in different group activities helped students to develop several skills, such as teamwork, respect for diversity, and knowledge sharing. For the purpose of achieving national goals and promoting human development, the National Education Commission (2003) has provided an analytical framework of equity, relevance, quality, effectiveness and efficiency relating to policies and goals. There are many success stories concerning the implementation of co-curricular programmes, such as “Pals of Two Cities”, student parliaments, student exchange programmes between Tamil and Sinhala schools in the North and East of the country, etc. Children started appreciating diversity, as well as the need for working together and the importance of speaking a second language. They enjoyed and learned more, thanks to their involvement in co-curricular activities rather than solely in the formal curricula.

Way forward

With a ten-year experience in the involvement of post-conflict programmes, it is time to engage in research activities in order to assess the success and weaknesses of such programmes, and to perform better in the future. It is impossible to develop students' skills simply by means of textbooks and deskwork within the classroom. Although in some schools teachers implement curricula effectively resorting to innovative activities, this is not the case in all schools. Although there have been several reforms in education, which highlighted the importance of building peace and positive attitudes, they have not been implemented as expected due to the lack of proper guidance for teachers (Gunawardhana, 2013.) Monitoring is needed to assess the effectiveness of programmes and to suggest remedial actions. As children are much interested in co-curricular activities, it is necessary to strengthen and broaden this field. Wherever possible, it is required to integrate the concepts of peace, social cohesion, citizenship and sustainable development in all subjects, in order to bring about good citizens for the country and the world at large.

Power Point presentation by Mrs. Kristina Kaihari

Counsellor of Education - History and Citizenship Education - at the Finnish National Agency for Education

Enhancing Citizenship and Human Rights in Education in Finland

Finland has always placed great value on education. It has been indispensable for a tiny northern country that has practically no other natural resources than forests. Our society's wellbeing and prosperity is built on equity in education and on the equal right to learning. The key objective of the Finnish educational policy is to provide all citizens with equal access to education – regardless of age, place of residence, economic circumstances, sex, or mother tongue. Education is considered to be a fundamental right of all citizens. Statutes guarantee everyone residing in Finland – not only Finnish citizens – the right to free basic education. They also prescribe compulsory basic education. In Finland, education is free at all levels, from pre-primary to higher education. In pre-primary and basic education, textbooks, daily meal and transportation for students living far away from school are free of charge.

We have taken decisive steps to offer equal opportunities also for people with an immigrant background to pursue study paths all the way to tertiary education, should they wish to do so. By inclusion, we mean not only equal educational opportunities for all, but also the strategies and structures that guarantee successful learning for all students. It means that Finland has practically only non-selective and free public schools.

Teachers have the same qualification requirements everywhere. They are highly trained (Master's degree), wherefore teaching and administrative staff are able to utilize research and assessment information and constantly develop their work. Teachers have received very thorough pedagogical training as well, so they are capable to implement the curriculum by motivating and inspiring pedagogies, learning methods and tools. They also have essential skills to differentiate teaching for different learners. Early intervention and support are essential, once a child is in need. In every school, there are special needs teachers.

In Finland, we have recently updated our national core curricula for pre-primary education, basic education and general upper secondary schools. They emphasize human rights and the respect for human dignity in many ways⁵⁷, even more than before. Teaching and learning are based on equality

⁵⁷ Eg., the core curriculum for basic education emphasizes “transversal competencies” that need to be taken into account in all subjects, such as:

- learning-to-learn;

and cultural diversity, and aim at promoting democracy and active citizenship as well as global citizenship.

For us, citizenship education plays a significant role. It is important to educate children in such a way that they grow up to be responsible, active citizens. Therefore, civics as a school subject was stressed when the national core curriculum for basic and secondary education was reformed. Awareness about human rights has been increased in the national Core Curricula, including in subjects of religions and worldview studies.

The most crucial issue in implementing the new curricula in all schools, as of August 2016, is to foster democratic values, positive cooperation and participative school culture in order to give all children the same opportunities and to prevent exclusion.

One of the main tasks of the Compulsory Social Studies/Citizenship subject (National Curriculum 2014) is that pupils are guided to act in a pluralistic society that understands diversity and respects human rights and equality in line with the values and principles of democracy. One of the objectives is to guide the pupil to become aware of himself or herself as an individual and as a member of different communities, to understand the importance of human rights and equality and to perceive the judicial principles of society. Another objective is to encourage the pupil to practise the basic skills of democratic involvement and to discuss different views constructively. Pupils are encouraged as well to participate in the activities of different communities and to practise safe use of media, with social awareness.

Education is key to increasing social cohesion and inclusion. Each and every child and adolescent must be empowered to find his/her place as an active member of society. Safe and supportive settings and learning environments are an important prerequisite and, here, a whole-school approach is needed.

Main ideas of the curriculum reform 2014 (National Core Curriculum for Basic Education) and 2015 (National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Schools)

- The focus of the whole reform is enhancing *the joy of learning and the active role of students*;
- In the context of rethinking the *school culture* and the *relationship*

-
- cultural competence, interaction and expression;
 - taking care of oneself, managing daily life;
 - multiliteracy (covers also media and information literacy); and
 - participation, involvement and building a sustainable future.

between the school and the community, diverse and open cooperation with NGOs and other civil society actors is also essential;

- It is necessary to renew the idea of a learning environment;
- Important goals of learning are the *ability to work together, to communicate and interact, to think and learn, and to live in a sustainable way;*
- Future challenges will be tackled by strengthening the seven areas of *transversal competencies;*
- *Multidisciplinary learning modules* will be used as new obligatory tools for teaching and learning;
- ***Schools are expected to develop their work as learning communities.***

In the new Curriculum for Basic Education, Finland has introduced 7 transversal competences that aim at fostering generic skills of students. They are linked to each subject. Multidisciplinary modules are stressed in order to increase integration between different subjects and to raise different perspectives on certain phenomena. The new Curriculum also strengthens cooperation between teachers.

Compulsory subjects such as history, civics, ethics, religion, geography and health education are at the heart of the process of learning human rights values, different cultures, religions and faiths, respect for each other, as well as global education issues. If there are at least three children in a school belonging to a certain religious group, they have the right to receive religious teaching about their own religion. There are National Core Curricula for the Evangelical-Lutheran religion, the Orthodox religion, the Catholic religion, Islam and Judaism.

The task of religion as a school subject is to provide pupils with an extensive general knowledge and ability regarding religion and worldviews. This way, pupils get familiarized with the studied religion and its diversity. The subject promotes an understanding of the relationship between religion and culture. The instruction of religion supports the pupils' ability to participate in the dialogue within and between religions and worldviews. It also encourages pupils to respect life, human dignity, and whatever they and others consider sacred.

We would like to see young people play a more active role in democratic participation and decision-making processes; schools are an ideal place for encouraging this. School democracy is an accurate means to acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment. All schools in Finland are obliged to institute an organ consisting of pupils or student councils, to issue opinions on school management.

Transversal Competences

“Transversal competence” refers to an entity consisting of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will. Competence also means an ability to apply knowledge and skills in a given situation. The increased need for transversal competence arises from changes in the surrounding world. Competencies that cross the boundaries of different fields of knowledge and skills are a precondition for personal growth, study, work and civic activity now and in the future. For example, in the context of some specific tasks, such as *Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression*, pupils are guided to place themselves in the situation of the other, so that knowledge of human rights and the rights of the child are fostered.

Through the transversal competence entitled “*Participating, influencing and constructing a sustainable future*”, pupils learn to participate in *planning their own studies, school work as a whole, learning environments and decision-making of a civil society*, as well as in the creation of rules and agreements. They will also learn to negotiate, to mediate, to face and to solve conflicts and to judge their suggestions in the light of equity, equality and fairness.

Some Best Practices and Tools

Finland embraces a safe school environment. We can get far by simply strengthening the sense of community. Elements such as student welfare, social interaction and a climate of trust between students, teachers and parents are vital. Promoting safety, individual support and early intervention relates to the health and wellbeing of the entire school community. All schools in Finland providing basic education are obliged to have a plan for protecting pupils from harassment and school bullying, as well as for fostering diversity and tackling discrimination. All educational establishments are required to have equality plans. It is crucial to share, use and develop *existing best practices* in schools through networks and meetings.

- 1) In this context, the Ministry of Education and Culture has supported the ***Kivakoulu*** (“Nice school”) programme, aimed at reducing school bullying. About 90% of all schools in Finland (ca. 2500 schools) are registered users of the programme and have reached good results. The University of Turku coordinates and develops the programme (since 2011), which has been implemented in some other countries as well⁵⁸.
- 2) **Peer mediation** is a solution-oriented and voluntary method, where pupil mediators help the parties to a conflict to find a solution and to thus change

⁵⁸ <http://www.kivaprogram.net/>.

their behavior.

- 3) The targets of the **MLCW (Mannerheim League for Child Welfare) Peer Support Scheme** are building a positive school ethos and atmosphere, maintaining awareness and co-operating with the school staff, listening to classmates and helping lonely or bullied pupils.
- 4) The “**Global Citizen in Finland project**”/“**Schools reaching out to a Global World**” provides school cases presenting pupil-centered activities and tools to foster global citizenship skills and mutual understanding⁵⁹.
- 5) **Ahtisaari-päivä (Ahtisaari-day)** is commemorated each November in all Finnish schools. It is promoted by President Martti Ahtisaari and CMI (Peace broker) to prevent conflicts and to learn conflict resolution in schools by different tools⁶⁰.
- 6) As part of the implementation of the **Action Plan “Meaningful in Finland”**, we aim at providing teachers and school personnel with improved knowledge, skills and tools regarding the prevention of violent radicalization through various means. The ultimate goal is to combat discrimination, racism and hate speech, and to foster social inclusion. The action plan contains ten initiatives, such as training of the education personnel, youth work, sports and dialogue between religions⁶¹.
- 7) **The Finnish National Agency for Education** published, in April 2017, a Teacher’s Guide, entitled “*Constructive Interaction - strengthening democratic inclusion, preventing hate speech and violent radicalization*”. We have taken use of essential international processes and sources, such as the *Teacher’s guide on prevention of violent extremism* by UNESCO, as well as *Competencies for Democratic Culture Framework* and *Teaching Controversial Issues* by the Council of Europe.
- 8) **#KANNUSTUSRYHMÄ (‘Support group’ against bullying and racism)** has been led and launched by the President of the Republic of Finland, Mr. Sauli Niinistö (April 2017). It encourages pupils to fight against bullying and racism and to foster tolerance, respect and dignity in innovative ways, both within schools and outside schools. They are encouraged to share those thoughts and ideas on YouTube.

Teachers have a key role in encountering and combatting racism and intolerance

⁵⁹ http://www.oph.fi/english/publications/2011/schools_reaching_out_to_a_global_world.

⁶⁰ <http://ahtisaaripaiva.fi/>.

⁶¹ The programme in English is available at: http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2016/toimintaohjelma.html?lang=fi&extra_locale=en.

in classrooms. In Finland, State-funded teacher education and training have been covering the issue of human rights for years. The Government also allocates funds for in-service training of teachers, where competencies for working in a multicultural and multilingual school environment, as well as teaching skills in human rights have been given a specific emphasis.

Our world today is facing new challenges posed by violent radicalization. It is imperative to systematically reach out to young people at risk of marginalization and alienation. In order to combat this phenomenon, we need improved dialogue and coherent collaboration, both internationally between relevant organizations (*UN system/UNESCO, Council of Europe, EU Commission, Nordic cooperation etc.*), and nationally between policy sectors and other stakeholders.

It is crucial to motivate and to encourage our youth to participate in the development of our societies. The future of democratic values and of our democratic system depends on proactive, engaged and empowered citizens.

Power Point presentation by Mr. Renato Operti

Senior Programme Specialist at IBE-UNESCO

Global Citizenship Education to promote sustainable, inclusive and peace-driven societies

Contextualization of Global Citizenship Education

- Education for peace and sustainable development is currently one of the overarching education goals of UNESCO; empowering global citizens is a key objective within this goal.
- The notions of Human Rights (HR) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) come together when both the rights and responsibilities of individuals are fostered to build a sustainable, inclusive and peaceful world.
- To this extent, HR and GCED have been included as specific issues in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, particularly in SDG4.7: *“By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, **human rights**, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, **global citizenship** and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.”*

Main challenges related to target 4.7 and GCED

- Target 4.7 is complex as it touches upon a variety of issues extremely relevant to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Agenda, but, at the same time, highly complicated to monitor and assess.
- GCED is multi-faceted and holistic, and aims at developing in students the competencies required to act individually and collectively, both locally and globally, towards a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and sustainable future for all.
- Additionally, there is not such a universally given definition of GCED or universal agreements as to how it is to be conceived and implemented, or to how education systems can be tailored to promote it.
- As a result, the implementation of GCED objectives, contents and approaches including Human Rights is not uniform, but, rather, it is carried out in multiple ways, to various degrees, and under different lenses, both in and out of school.

International Bureau of Education’s lines of work to address these challenges

To work towards the fulfillment of SDG 4.7, the IBE advocates a transversal approach to address GCED issues, which also encompasses Human Rights as a key and cross-cutting component.

These are, *inter alia*, the main activities carried out by IBE-UNESCO:

- Development and application of two coding schemes with the support of international experts to establish some standards with regard to what is eligible to be considered GCED and, in this way, to facilitate the monitoring of GCED content in education policies, plans and curricula;
- Technical assistance in collaboration with the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding to implement GCED in the curricula and pedagogy of 4 beneficiary countries – Cambodia, Colombia, Mongolia and Uganda;
- Development of tools and guidelines to assist Member States in the implementation of GCED in their national education policies, plans and curricula as well as in their teaching and learning materials.

Main Lessons Learnt

- 1) The integration and interconnectedness of main ideas and concepts (namely civic education and civil education) under a shared robust GCED conceptual framework implies the discussion of the rationale, scope, methodology, concept and competencies related to it.
- 2) GCED needs a systemic approach (avoiding piecemeal interventions) to national policies, curricula, teachers’ role and professional development, pedagogical approaches, and assessment.
- 3) The need to focus on the synergies and tensions towards educating about universal values that embed a cosmopolitan open vision of the world, while, at the same time, recognizing the interdependence of nations and communities, as well as respecting local values, identities and cultures (overcoming crude versions of homogenization and multiculturalism).
- 4) The need to decide whether to understand it as a stand-alone subject, as an integrated subject or as a crosscutting theme to the curricula and pedagogy.

Thank you.

Statement by Mrs. Samar Kildani

National Director of El Hassan Youth Award, Jordan

(Translated from Arabic)

Good afternoon, dear participants.

It is an honour to meet you all. I have the deepest respect for you all, since you are activists and actors engaged in the process of enhancing peace, working on building stable, coexisting and peaceful societies. Today's presentations showed us the reasons behind conflicts, which are religious/confessional (Bahrain), economic (Colombia) and ethnical (Sri Lanka). All of these reasons reaffirm the objectives mentioned in the concept-note of this event. That being said, we must work on achieving these objectives in order to overcome conflicts and disputes.

It is worth mentioning that the essence of religions throughout the world is compatible with human rights. All religions call for fraternity, compassion, and co-existence. Differences in doctrines within one religion should not be causing conflicts and disputes. Religions do not discriminate between individuals. Humanity brings everyone together, regardless of his or her natural differences.

Ethnic diversity exists in all countries of the world and this diversity is supposed to enrich culture and social structures. Inequalities, as well as economic disparities among the population, would exacerbate the different existing conflicts in the societies. Therefore, economic policies and educational systems need to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, thereby helping to promote the concept of social peace.

The Qur'anic verse number 70 of the surah 'Isra'a' says: "*And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference*". This confirms that Islam does not differentiate between people on the basis of their religion. The Bible also states the following: "*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another (John 13:3)*".

When I speak about the experience of my country, Jordan, in promoting equal citizenship and human rights, I refer to the 1952 Jordanian Constitution, as well as to the law on the National Centre for Human Rights and to legislation governing citizenship rights. This has contributed to integrating the components of the Jordanian national structure, which includes multiple constituents, religions and ethnic groups.

Jordan has also welcomed many foreigners, mainly from Arab countries, including people who have fled bloody conflicts in their countries, such as in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Libya. They have been protected by the laws of the Jordanian State without discrimination, and have enjoyed their full rights and full respect for their human dignity. It is one of the noble values that His Highness Prince Al-Hassan Bin Talal, Chairman and sponsor of the Arab Thought Forum, focused on in his speech delivered to academics at the University of Science and Technology in May 2017. He highlighted that equal access to education is a human right whose essence constitutes the basis of human and social development and enhances empowerment for equal citizenship, pointing out that citizenship education aims at disseminating values, knowledge and life skills based on respect for human rights, social justice, diversity, equality, environmental sustainability and peace.

I refer to the statement delivered by His Excellency the Ambassador of Bahrain on the achievements of the Kingdom of Bahrain in the advancement of human rights as well as on its positive contribution to the dialogue of civilizations. I am pleased to note that Jordan was a role model for some of our brothers in terms of parliamentary democracy and laws governing freedoms and human rights, as well as in terms of educational systems. Jordan also worked on enacting legislations that affirm equal citizenship between all citizens in political institutions, in order to ensure representation of the different components of the Jordanian society. Jordan has also taken into account women's rights, giving them a reasonable quota within the Parliament and the local government councils. Therefore, Jordan is on its way to achieve the full integration of women.

Allow me to share with you a summary of the role of civic education in achieving social peace. Civic education has a prominent role in achieving social peace in any human society. Education consists in transforming the individual from a biological being to a social being while developing his/her personality on the psychological, social, physical, spiritual and mental levels. In addition, the educational process is inspired by the society's philosophy in order to meet its purposes and requirements.

I would also like to highlight some trends in the Jordanian society, which are in line with the directives of the Hashemite leadership represented by His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn al-Hussein, and are characterized by rationality, moderation, temperance, tolerance and acceptance of others. In his seventh discussion paper, King Abdullah highlighted that the building of our human abilities and the development of the educational system represent the essence of the nation's renaissance. No nation can emerge without education. Nothing can

equal education in the process of building nations and transforming the world into the most beautiful, perfect place. All these elements represent a common ground to understand others and deepen the values of forgiveness, away from extremism and fanaticism. This can only be achieved through curricula that allow our students to have deep and critical thinking, encourage them to ask questions and balance opinions, and teach them about different cultures and dialogue. We look forward to a strong Jordan that offers its children the best education enabling them to face the challenges of life, to establish successful work, to do valuable jobs, to have harmonious families and to build a cohesive society. In order to enhance the values of love, cohesion and stronger human relations, Prince Hassan bin Talal founded the “*El Hassan Youth Award*” in 1984 at the Amman Baccalaureate School, as a pilot project similar to the Duke of Edinburgh International Prize, for the purpose of celebrating human principles, both at the individual and at the societal level. The award represents a global framework for extra-curricular education. It has been welcomed by the youth, the society, as well as by public and private institutions. This allowed promoting the idea of this award throughout Jordan and increasing the number of participants. Many award-winners are faculty members in universities, doctors, engineers, successful teachers and administrators, military officers, parents of creative families, etc.

The Minister of Education in Jordan, Dr. Omar Al-Razzaz, highlighted the leading role of education in enhancing religious values, tolerance and acceptance of others’ values over extremism and intolerance. He pointed out that the fight against extremism is carried out by fighting ignorance, spreading knowledge and encouraging the students’ ability to think aloud, after having learned how to think critically and constructively and to replace the feeling of marginalization and frustration with self-confidence.

As a Christian, Arab and Jordanian woman, I am proud to be a citizen of my country, Jordan, where I enjoy the full rights and freedoms enshrined in the Islamic legislation. I had the chance, since my graduation, to teach in both private and public schools of the Kingdom. I felt the love of all the students and all my colleagues, in my life and in my work, with regards to the “*El Hassan Youth Award*” since its establishment at the Amman Baccalaureate School. This is a general feature of the Jordanian society, which is characterized by diversity as well as religious (Christians and Muslims) and ethnic pluralism (Arabs, Circassians, Chechnya, Kurds, Armenians).

In conclusion, it is important to introduce the idea of education for peace and to show the negative effects of conflicts. Schools play a major role in establishing a culture of peace among pupils. Safe schools must be ensured

for all students. In addition to that, protection and respect must be provided in schools to make sure they are a safe ground. This is the responsibility of governments and international organizations, which should take the necessary steps to prevent violence in schools and to provide a climate of peace for children to learn and for teachers to educate in a safe and healthy environment.

Suggestions and recommendations:

- 1- Providing courses to teachers regarding human rights and building citizenship-related skills. Training them not to discriminate between students in schools.
- 2- Strengthening the school programme by introducing descriptive activities that develop students' personality, in order to prepare them to accept others.
- 3- Amending schools' curricula at all levels to contribute to the achievement of equal citizenship and human rights, taking into account the specific backgrounds of students.



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