Intercultural competence for all

Preparation for living in a heterogeneous world

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Introduction

Josef Huber, Head of the Pestalozzi Programme

Concern for mutual understanding, be it in terms of multicultural or intercultural understanding, competence or dialogue permeates the content and the everyday reality of our work at the Council of Europe. An organisation which was created to promote intergovernmental co-operation in the domains of democracy, human rights and the rule of law throughout Europe is by definition a place where mutual understanding, or the absence of it, is at the forefront of our preoccupations.

The aims and vision of the Organisation – living together in a Europe without dividing lines and ensuring deep security – can only be achieved when people across Europe understand each other and themselves better. This requires an understanding of the processes of constant change underway, which are nourished by groups of people moving closer together, whether virtually or in person.

The Warsaw Declaration and Action Plan of the heads of state and government of the Council of Europe of 2005, as well as the Wrocław Declaration on 50 years of European Cultural Co-operation have already underlined the crucial importance of intercultural dialogue, exchange and education amongst and for Europeans in order to build a common European future based on the values and principles the Council of Europe stands for and promotes.

Today, intercultural understanding and intercultural competence are more important than ever because they make it possible for us to address the root causes of some of the most virulent problems of today's societies in the form of misunderstandings across cultural, socio-cultural, ethnic and other lines: discrimination, racism, hate speech and so on.

There is a real urgency – in many aspects of our lives – for education, which can help citizens live together in our diverse societies. For this reason we all need to develop intercultural competence. The ability to understand each other across all types of cultural barriers is a fundamental prerequisite for making our diverse democratic societies work.

The Council of Europe has a long-standing history of concern for this matter going back to the 1970s. The White Paper on intercultural dialogue adopted in May 2008 identifies intercultural education as one of the five key areas where action is needed to safeguard and develop human rights, democracy and the

rule of law and to promote mutual understanding. Intercultural competence is a central precondition for every individual and since it is not automatically acquired, it needs to be developed, learned and maintained throughout life.

Many Council of Europe actions, programmes and projects deal, in one way or another, with improving mutual understanding: intercultural dialogue, intercultural cities, campaigns against discrimination, the intercultural dimension in history and inter-religious matters, to name but a few.

The present publication looks more precisely at the development of intercultural competence as a key element of mainstream education. It is clear that without appropriate policies, which place intercultural competence at the heart of all education, and, above all, without the everyday practice of developing the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge needed for mutual understanding, no sustainable societal change is possible.

A group of experts, Francesca Brotto, Gerhard Neuner, Roberto Ruffino and Rüdiger Teutsch met several times over almost two years to try and draw some of the loose ends together, in an attempt to propose a more coherent view of the issues surrounding intercultural matters. In particular, the group focused on the educational aspects involved. This was in itself a rich intercultural experience as well as a wonderful process of mutual development and enrichment, sharing and discussing ideas from various perspectives which have been shaped by different experiences, pursuing the common aim of establishing a clearer grasp of all the elements and aspects involved. Katarzyna Karwacka-Vögele, during her traineeship at the Council of Europe, entered into a different, receptive type of dialogue with the authors and added a further perspective based on the existing work.

The book proposes itself as a reader on the current state of work with regard to the development of intercultural competence for all citizens in Europe.

Chapter one is dedicated to the reflection on a framework for intercultural education. It contains two contributions.

Gerhard Neuner offers a comprehensive view and description of the factors which need to be considered when seeking to introduce intercultural competence development into mainstream curricula. His essay covers a discussion on why intercultural education is important, what could be included in curricula and the implications of intercultural education on classroom work and teacher education. His work combines the theoretical foundations with very pragmatic considerations

and proposals and he demonstrates the need for a vision for intercultural education in his introduction:

> It must inspire people's minds, stir their emotions and lend wings to their actions. Such a vision must be convincing in its theoretical foundation, appeal to practitioners, motivate them and support them in their daily work.

Katarzyna Karwacka-Vögele, during her traineeship at the Council of Europe in the unit responsible for the Pestalozzi Programme and for intercultural education and exchanges, focuses on the question of how we can assess whether intercultural competence is or has been developed. She looks into personal and institutional indicators and proposes a first attempt at creating a systematic overview of such indicators.

Chapter two focuses on individual exchanges, partnerships and the recognition of achievements as ways of creating spaces for and experiences of intercultural communication and action, as well as ways of highlighting and rewarding successful practice.

Roberto Ruffino's contribution is a combination and adaptation of two papers he wrote for the Council of Europe. The first part is taken from a paper arguing for the importance of facilitating individual pupil exchange programmes and it covers the historical background from the 1970s to today. In doing so he provides a rich source of information and argumentation quoting from a wide range of international organisations. The second part is conceived as a tool to support the setting-up and running of pupil exchanges and it outlines all the aspects which need to be considered in order to make such exchanges successful learning and development experiences.

Rüdiger Teutsch addresses school partnerships as tools for the development of better intercultural understanding and offers guidelines and pedagogical orientation to help make such partnerships successful.

Francesca Brotto focuses on ways to promote initiatives and efforts in the field of intercultural education at school level. She describes a label scheme for intercultural practices in schools which recognises and highlights what schools are doing to build intercultural competence within their own environments, whether in the classroom or within the school as a whole, for individual learners or for local communities. Such a label could reward existing capacity-building practice for intercultural education within schools in Europe.

Josef Huber, Strasbourg, January 2012

Chapter One
Towards a framework
for intercultural education

The dimensions of intercultural education

Gerhard Neuner

1. Introduction[1]

The purpose of this contribution is to provide an introduction to the foundations and dimensions of intercultural education as developed by UNESCO and the Council of Europe and to serve as an encouragement for the development of adequate concepts for school development, teacher training and teaching practice.

It targets all those in the educational field involved in policy making and teaching, in particular pre- and in-service teacher trainers, policy makers, school and curriculum developers, teachers and school heads.

Education needs a vision. It must inspire people's minds, stir their emotions and lend wings to their actions. Such a vision must be convincing in its theoretical foundation, appeal to practitioners, motivate them and support them in their daily work.

UNESCO states that schools, as one of the principal institutions in society, have the task of "developing the potential of the learners through transmission of knowledge and the creation of competencies, attitudes and values that empower them for life in society" (UNESCO 2007:12).

There is no doubt that the success of all educational concepts depends on an education policy which develops a vision of a desirable society.

Once an education policy has been put in place it is used to develop an educational philosophy. This philosophy asks questions about educators' values and attitudes and the competencies to be developed. It is applied at institutional level in the form of a general concept of education, which looks at the role of schools in society, the measures needed for adequate school development and governance, the content of curricula and the essentials of teacher education. This concept is condensed into a set of principles for teaching and learning in the classroom.

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1. I would like to thank my colleagues Francesca Brotto, Josef Huber, Roberto Ruffino and Rüdiger Teutsch for their valuable and helpful suggestions.

In other words, education:

at the level of society	requires a policy of education (a vision)
at the institutional level	requires a philosophy of education from which a concept of education is derived (for example of school development, pre-service and in-service teacher education)
at the classroom and subject level	requires educational principles (for example about the appropriate setting and adequate methods of teaching and learning)

In the field of education in recent years intercultural education has become a major topic of discussion. This has led to a number of publications from the two major international organisations concerned with societal questions and the corresponding development of education policies: the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe. (cf. also chapters 1.3 and 2). These two institutions have developed a vision of societal development based on human rights (UN) or on human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Council of Europe) which serves as a guiding light for intercultural education.

In this contribution we try to assemble, summarise and integrate the basic positions of the two institutions, published in various places, concerning intercultural education. Furthermore, wherever feasible, an attempt is made to further develop the conceptual framework of intercultural education for its application in schools, classrooms and in teacher education institutions.

Since all member states of the UN subscribe to human rights one should be able to assume that a human rights based education policy receives universal support. However, in a number of states the full respect of human rights as defined by the UN (cf. section 3.1) seems to be disputed. The same applies to the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe – human rights, democracy and the rule of law – and their interpretation in the member states when it comes to accepting a policy for intercultural education.

For that reason, reservations may emerge concerning the vision for and concept of intercultural education in states where there is no unanimous consent about its socio-political foundations.

2. New challenges for education in times of social change

If education is "the instrument both of the all-rounded development of the human person and of that person's participation in social life" (UNESCO 1992:4), any

major socio-political changes will inevitably stimulate discussion – sometimes heated and controversial – about the validity of the foundations and basic assumptions of education. These discussions might cover such issues as our concept of "humanity" or an "educated person" and the skills essential for preparing young people for life. Eventually, the discussion will lead to the revision or replacement of major components of the framework of education (for example educational objectives, values, attitudes and competencies) and the ways in which they are to be put into practice in teaching and learning.

> An educational system does not exist in a historical and social vacuum. It functions within the framework of a dominant culture with specific political outlooks, attitudes, values and norms. But these frameworks are not static; they are continuously changing. (Council of Europe 2005:15)

2.1. The current socio-political situation

The current concern with intercultural education has its origin in the far-reaching societal changes that have been underway in recent decades in Europe and worldwide.

These changes manifest themselves generally as long-term socio-political processes with great dynamic force. They include:

– the globalisation of finance and the economy, of work and recreation, with its impact creating worldwide dependencies and uniform ways of life and lifestyles;

– rapidly increasing private and professional mobility;

– the expansion of migration, which in many countries has led to the development of new minority groups in addition to already existing ones.

Today we are experiencing a dramatic mixing of peoples from different nations, cultures, ethnic groups and religions, especially in metropolitan areas. These processes can create all kinds of social tensions and conflicts.

In metropolitan areas in Europe there is hardly a school, or even a classroom, to be found with pupils from a homogeneous socio-cultural background. Even where there are still homogeneous classes, for example in rural areas of some European countries, the vastly growing, global impact of information and communication technology leads to a clash – or, at least, a coexistence – of different worlds and ways of doing things.

It must be emphasised that what we are experiencing at present is just the beginning of worldwide and long-term changes in society.

2.2. The vision of intercultural education

Intercultural education has its foundation in a vision of a world where human rights are respected and where democratic participation and the rule of law is guaranteed to all.

> The practical outcome of this global vision is a more caring society showing more solidarity, capable of abating the negative effects of individualism, marginalisation and social exclusion. It is a society characterised by a high level of the social capital, solidarity and co-operation. In this society, democracy is not just a political organisation or a form of governance. It is seen as a way of life, or as Dewey put it "an associative living" based on community, communication and interdependence. (Council of Europe 2003:18)

> For democracies to work and to be sustainable, education is paramount. Economic sustainability needs a work force with continuously expanding competences and skills; environmental sustainability needs awareness and knowledge about the interconnectedness of nature and human action as well as constant innovation; societal sustainability needs democratic structures and institutions as well as, and above all, individuals who are empowered to act democratically. (Huber 2008)

In multicultural societies one of the central aspects of education for democratic citizenship with its emphasis on "learning and living together democratically" must be education for intercultural competence if our vision of sustainable democratic societies is to come true.

Considering the dramatic changes outlined above, intercultural education can no longer be regarded as a mere add-on to the curriculum in occasional projects, but it must extend, and eventually replace, the monocultural, monolingual setting of our schools and lead to a change of mindset in traditional education. In order for this to take place, intercultural education must make significant advances in the ability of education professionals to work creatively and co-operatively towards change by focusing on school practice, whether in the classroom or within the school as a whole. Intercultural education is geared towards long-term changes in schools and curriculum development, and it serves as a framework for the development of new methods and practices of teaching and learning in the classroom.

2.3. The role and dimensions of intercultural education

Under the recent socio-political developments "education has made a spectacular comeback to the centre of attention" (Council of Europe 2003:53) and has gained new perspectives: "In a world experiencing rapid change, and where

cultural, political, economic and social upheaval challenges traditional ways of life, education has a major role to play in promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence" (UNESCO 2007:8).

> It is self-evident that relationships between people who a generation ago might have had very little contact, are now commonplace. In the reduced spatial and temporal dimensions of the contemporary world, they need to interact and understand each other on a basis of mutual respect, on a basis of intercultural competence. (Byram 2003:13)

> If at the level of society social cohesion and peaceful coexistence are desirable, a philosophy of intercultural education must be formulated as a vision of desirable future social developments and an educational framework must be derived which helps us to achieve these ends. (Ball 1990, quoted in: Council of Europe 2003:19)

During the six decades of its existence, the Council of Europe has elaborated and applied a specific "model of education for learning democracy" (Council of Europe 2003:19) according to a number of principles, among which the most prominent are:

– values-oriented education;

– citizenship competencies for all;

– the direct practice of democracy.

Since these principles are fundamental to intercultural education we quote them in full (Council of Europe 2003: 20 f.):

> Values-oriented education

> The policy goals defined by the Council are value-driven. They stem from the three fundamental values of the Council of Europe, namely respect of human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law. As a result, education policies promoted by the Council explicitly sustain these democratic values. This leads to specific policy goals such as education for democratic citizenship, multilingual and intercultural education, critical understanding of history, confidence-building and democratic security, etc.

> Against this background, the explicit values incorporated in education policy statements become the criteria and purpose for action.

> Citizen competencies for all

> Democracy is not limited to a set of values included in the common heritage of European societies. These values must be understood and assumed by each generation of citizens. This is why regardless of the goals and specific contents (languages, history or citizenship education), the Council's education activities have always had in view the competencies that make the active participation of citizens possible. These competencies are indispensable in consolidating and improving democracy as a historical project. They are part of the civic culture of each person and are acquired throughout life in a lifelong learning process.

Direct practice of democracy

Democracy cannot be mass delivered to the classroom, through transmission similar to that of classic school subjects. On the contrary, democracy emerges from personal experience, direct practice in daily life.

In this sense, the top-down compulsory curriculum (e.g. through civic education or similar subjects) has a limited influence on the democratic behaviour of pupils. Democratic education has few chances of occurring in a standardised, strongly formalised learning environment. To discover and reinvent democracy, students need to participate in collective decision-making, to organise themselves in self-governing bodies, to negotiate and communicate, bring arguments and consider other people's arguments, exercise their own rights and freedoms without impairing other people's freedoms and liberties in the process. What this means is a direct practice of democracy in educational institutions through experiential learning, active participation, membership, collective negotiating, critical thinking, role-playing, problem solving and community involvement.

From the point of view of education policies, this means specific goals such as: practising participative democracy in educational institutions, promoting human rights frameworks in the school environment, developing a democratic organisational culture, encouraging equity (including gender equity), promoting a whole school approach to democratic education, etc.

3. The support of intercultural education by the major international organisations

It has been mentioned that in the field of education policy the UN and the Council of Europe are among the major institutional authorities worldwide and that the concept of intercultural education is based on their orientations.

3.1. United Nations

When the Charter of the United Nations was drafted in 1945, human rights were fixed as the foundation of international law. The founding member states declare that "education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace" is indispensable. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948 human rights were first comprehensively defined.

What are human rights?

Personal rights such as: equality before the law and equal entitlement to rights; right of life, liberty and security of person; freedom from slavery, torture, arbitrary arrest; right of fair public trial and presumption of innocence.

Rights in relationships between people, such as: right of privacy; freedom of movement; right to nationality; right to marry, have children, own property.

Public freedoms and political rights including: freedom of thought, conscience and religion; right to freedom of opinion and expression; right of peaceful assembly; right to elect a government.

> Economic, social and cultural rights including: right to work, rest and leisure; adequate standard of living for health; education; participation in cultural life. (Starkey 2003:67)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also contains the following passage:

> Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (Article 26)

The UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education, published in 2007, deserve special attention in our discussion. The paper aims to summarise the central issues surrounding intercultural education. It offers an insight into the basic publications concerning the international legal framework and presents the fundamental guiding principles for an intercultural approach.

3.2. Council of Europe

> In 1953 member states of the Council of Europe signed the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms which gives legal force to those rights and freedoms contained in it and provides a court to which individuals may take their cases. All individuals living in Europe are protected in this way, not just citizens of the member states. (Starkey 2003:68)

The Council of Europe, as one of the established authorities in the field of education, has undertaken a number of initiatives to promote intercultural education. The evolution of material related to intercultural education can be seen as the expression of the evolution of education policies within the Council of Europe (cf. Council of Europe 2003:35, footnotes 43 and 44).

This work began back in the 1970s with intercultural training for teachers, followed by the network of school links and exchanges in the 1980s, and the European Secondary School Student Exchange in the 1990s, just to name some of the major milestones of the past.

In 2003 in Athens the European Ministers of Education emphasised the role of intercultural education and the major contribution of the Council of Europe in maintaining and developing the unity and diversity of our European societies and urged the Council, "to focus its work programme on enhancing the quality of education as a response to the challenges posed by the diversity of our societies by making democracy learning and intercultural education key components of educational reforms". Member states were encouraged to introduce the

intercultural dimension in their education policies. Learning to live together in multicultural societies is defined as the main objective of intercultural education.

The action plan adopted by the Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe in Warsaw in May 2005, puts a strong emphasis on the role of education for the building of a more humane and inclusive Europe. Education for democratic citizenship based on human rights, intercultural education and exchanges, the promotion and safeguarding of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are at the core of this mission.

Since then, several projects have dealt with the issue. They concern, *inter alia*, the religious dimension of intercultural education, policies and practices for teaching socio-cultural diversity, as well as intercultural education and exchanges. A practical tool to measure the impact of intercultural encounters, the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters,[2] was developed by the Council of Europe.

3.3. European Commission

The European Commission also promotes intercultural education. Intercultural experiences are an integral part of the many mobility initiatives the Commission promotes and facilitates, such as the ERASMUS programme for university students. The reality of such exchanges demonstrates that intercultural competence is a necessary prerequisite for their success, both in academic and in personal terms. Intercultural education and exchanges at secondary school level could prepare the ground for this. In 2008 the "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue" provided an opportunity to emphasise cross-sector co-operation, with the promotion and development of initiatives bringing together different communities and social groups, at the same time approaching intercultural dialogue from multiple perspectives. A further aim of the year was to strengthen intercultural dialogue's mainstreaming within European Commission programmes and their relevant networks.

4. Clarification of the key concepts of intercultural education

Before entering into the discussion of the framework and the elements of intercultural education and in order to avoid misunderstanding and confusion we must first try to clarify a few related key concepts. For example: when we discuss

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2. The "Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters" (cf. Council of Europe 2009) contains excellent ideas for raising awareness in an intercultural learning context. It contains ideas for ways of writing down and reflecting on one's own experiences with "otherness and difference" and comparing and discussing them with others. The publication can be used with pupils in the classroom, but may also be a useful awareness-raising instrument in pre-service and in-service teacher training.
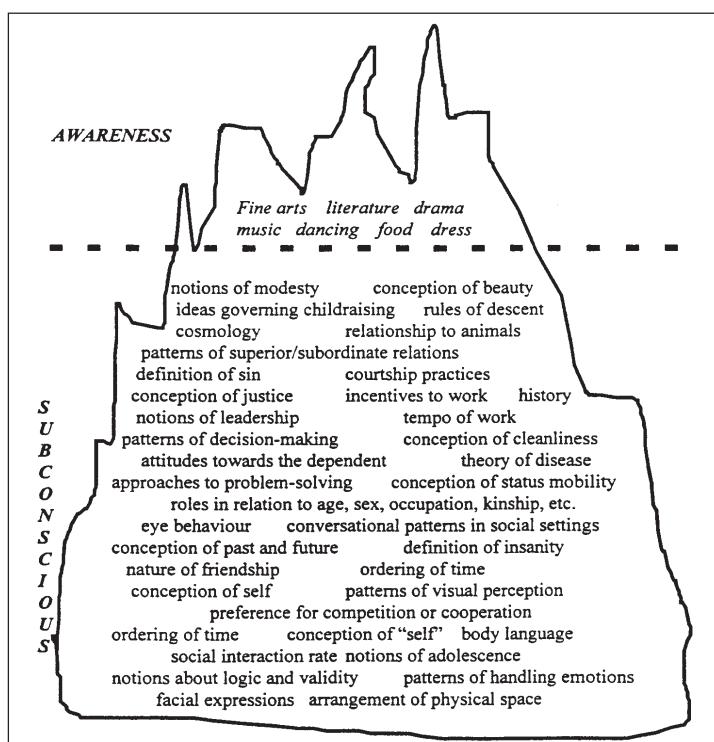
issues of culture, the chances are that each of us has a different notion of what culture is. Since there is hardly a term which leads to more misunderstandings than "culture", let us clarify what we mean when we use it.

4.1. Culture

Why is it so difficult to give an accurate and comprehensive definition of "culture"?

When talking about culture we deal with a rather limited "visible" proportion of concepts that we are aware of (language, works of art, dress, food and drink and so on), and a rather large "invisible", subconscious area of concepts that characterise our lives and ourselves as human beings (values and attitudes, for example).
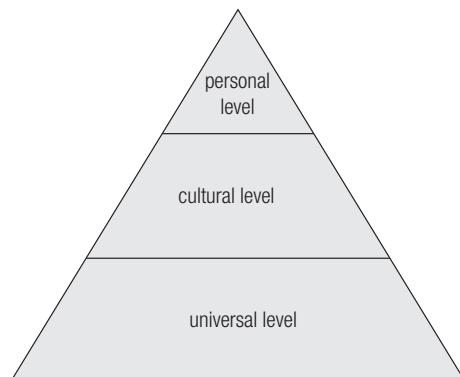
The analogy of "culture as an iceberg" (Brembeck 1977, quoted in: Lazar et. al. 2007:7; and Chase et al.1996, quoted in: Roche 2001:20) illustrates this complexity:


AWARENESS

*Fine arts   literature   drama
music   dancing   food   dress*

S U B C O N S C I O U S

notions of modesty   conception of beauty
ideas governing childraising   rules of descent
cosmology   relationship to animals
patterns of superior/subordinate relations
definition of sin   courtship practices
conception of justice   incentives to work   history
notions of leadership   tempo of work
patterns of decision-making   conception of cleanliness
attitudes towards the dependent   theory of disease
approaches to problem-solving   conception of status mobility
roles in relation to age, sex, occupation, kinship, etc.
eye behaviour   conversational patterns in social settings
conception of past and future   definition of insanity
nature of friendship   ordering of time
conception of self   patterns of visual perception
preference for competition or cooperation
ordering of time   conception of "self"   body language
social interaction rate   notions of adolescence
notions about logic and validity   patterns of handling emotions
facial expressions   arrangement of physical space

Another metaphor assumes that culture is structured hierarchically in "layers of building blocks" like a pyramid (Hofstede 1994, quoted in: Lázár et al. 2007:7).
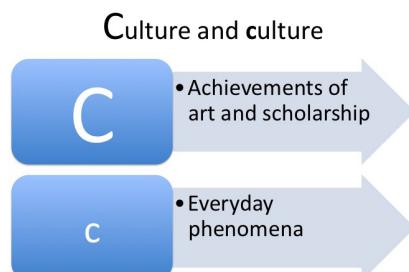
Hofstede "in his pyramid model differentiates three levels of 'software of the mind': universal, cultural and personal. He admits that trying to establish where exactly the borders lie between nature and culture, and between culture and personality is a challenge".

Our understanding of the term culture depends on which section of the "iceberg" or layer of the "pyramid" we are referring to. As a consequence, there is a wide range of definitions. At one end of the scale we find the traditional, elitist view of culture which concentrates on all products of art and scholarship, including literature, painting, music, philosophy and so on. This has been called culture with a capital "C" (Halverson 1985, quoted in Lázár et al. 2007:7).

At the other end of the scale we find everyday culture, represented by the things we use in our daily life (such as food and drink or dress or technical devices), by our daily actions (comprising work and leisure), by the way we think and feel about and value our possessions and actions and the ways in which others are distinguished from us. This is the area of culture with a lower-case "c".

Culture and culture

- C — • Achievements of art and scholarship
- c — • Everyday phenomena

In all definitions culture refers to a "set of signs by which the members of a given society recognize … one another, while distinguishing them from people not belonging to that society" (UNESCO 1992:10; cf. also Hofstede 1994:5 who

sees culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people of another").

Kramsch (1993:10) defines culture as "a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting".

UNESCO offers one of the most comprehensive definitions of culture in one of its publications:

> the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group… [encompassing] in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. (UNESCO 2001, quoted in: UNESCO, 2007:12)

The traditional view of culture (big C) would be too narrow and static for the scope of intercultural education, since it does not take into account individuals interacting in multicultural settings. Therefore it is essential to emphasise two further aspects of culture when thinking about intercultural education: the comprehensive aspect and the dynamic aspect.

Comprehensive aspect

Culture in its widest sense can be understood as a specific way of thinking, acting and feeling about one's own actions and the actions of others. This includes conscious or underlying explanations of the world and one's own and other people's place within it. It also encompasses beliefs, faiths, ideologies and world views, which we call upon to assert reality, truths, values and ideas of good and bad. It also implies, in the context of socio-cultural diversity, that there may be other groups with different ways of thinking, acting and feeling to ourselves.

Dynamic aspect

Culture as a group phenomenon develops further and changes according to changes in society; culture as the property of the individual is open to further development depending on knowledge and experience.

Implications for intercultural education

Intercultural education is not only concerned with information about cultures that may meet in some abstract way (no matter what kind of culture the term refers to), but it is concerned with people who interact on a daily basis in multicultural educational contexts – teachers and learners, policy makers and administrators, not forgetting parents – and are trying to deal with all the material, intellectual,

spiritual and emotional aspects of the different value systems, traditions and beliefs and ways of life that are involved.

4.2. Diversity, otherness and difference

The three terms, diversity, otherness and difference, are quite often used as synonyms. However, for the sake of clarification, their meaning should be differentiated.

Diversity refers to the observation of variation within a larger group that shares a common basis. It implies neighbourhood, openness, acceptance and inclusion, while otherness presupposes comparison with an emphasis on difference, and refers to oppositeness. A community emphasis on otherness may lead to demarcation and prejudice (the appreciation or depreciation of subgroups) as well as the emergence of prejudice, discrimination and exclusion.

It must be emphasised that cultural diversity has always been a distinctive feature of most societies, both in Europe and worldwide. Rare were those societies where the ways of thinking, acting and feeling were limited to a "one and only" way, if at all they ever existed or exist today. The belief in homogeneous societies is due to a failure to recognise existing diversity rather than to a total absence of diversity. Political systems and movements of various persuasions and forms have often tried to deny this. This was most notably the case in the 19th century when the idea of homogeneous nations and the building of nation states played a leading role in Europe. Resistance to diversity is still virulent today in certain quarters and is still used to justify the creation of new "homogeneous states", which can be seen as the long-term effect of the ideology of the nation state.

Implications for intercultural education

Diversity is not limited to aspects of culture, ethnic origin, language or religion. Neither is it restricted to faraway places and cultures, which is a reductionist, but unfortunately rather common, view in today's published discourse.

To counter such views it has to be emphasised that diversity is:

> the very substance of both nature and culture. It is an inherent attribute of life, which the new generations must maintain and improve. Furthermore, as the diversity of ability and talent is part of the human condition, any society should seek to take advantage of this potential and value it through human development policies. (Council of Europe 2003:28)

Furthermore, "cultural diversity is noted and protected by human rights agreements" (Council of Europe 2007:14).

These quotations make it clear that intercultural education is embedded in a much more comprehensive view of "education for diversity", comprising many aspects beyond implications of cultural difference, such as socio-cultural, socio-economic, regional, ideological aspects, based on faiths and beliefs, on gender, on age and so on. Diversity has always been a common feature of every educational setting, although quite often this has been overlooked or pushed under the carpet. The neglect of diversity and the emphasis on difference has quite often led (and still leads) to inequalities in education and even to discrimination. Diversity starts on our own doorstep!

The notion of diversity is one of the core concepts of intercultural education. It offers valuable potential for further development:

> Diversity as a value implies the notion of an inclusive society, with a vision of providing all inhabitants, regardless of differences with opportunities to participate and form their lives on an equal footing, within an atmosphere of good relations between groups and communities, and without too much social tension. (Council of Europe 2007:13)

The socio-political changes mentioned above indicate that we can no longer neglect diversity as a central issue for education, since we have to "educate new generations of children for a future in which they will increasingly have to appreciate variety and deal with differences"(Council of Europe 2007:13).

4.3. Multiculturalism, pluriculturalism, interculturalism

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism generally refers to the natural state of society that cannot but be diverse, namely multilingual, multi-ethnic, multireligious, etc. This particular meaning stresses the comparative dimension of multiculturalism, the coexistence of different entities that may manifest themselves as such in a common public sphere (for example in a multicultural society).

Pluriculturalism

While multiculturalism emphasises the presence of various groups in a community, pluriculturalism refers to the integration of aspects of other cultures by the individual (cf. the discussion of interim worlds, below). The intensive social mingling of various groups, currently evident in urban areas, means that traditional concepts of homogeneity (national, cultural, religious and so on) are beginning to dissolve. This may mean that people's identities become so multilayered that it becomes impossible to conceive of them any more in clear-cut categories. Consequently, the boundaries

of identification are shifting to such an extent that we are seeing concatenated or "nested", compound or multiple identities within the same person and subsequently a great complexity of one's sense of "belonging".

Interculturalism

Interculturalism is the active dimension of diversity. In addition to multiculturalism and pluriculturalism, it presupposes the interaction of individuals, groups and communities. "As an instrument of learning democracy, intercultural education creates deliberately these situations of exchange, mutual influence and cultural cross-fertilisation. Its purpose is to enhance diversity and complexity through a constant cultural dynamism" (Council of Europe 2003:28).

Interculturalism emphasises the interactive dimension of groups, and their capacity to build common projects, to assume shared responsibilities and to create common identities. According to Fennes and Hapgood (1997, quoted in Council of Europe 2003:34), interculturalism is basically a creative process:

> Intercultural learning is more than an encounter with another culture and is more than culture shock. Intercultural learning is based on the assumption that the fear of the foreign is not a natural destiny and that cultural development has always been a result of an encounter of different cultures. The prefix "inter" suggests that this fear and the historical barriers can be overcome. It also suggests a relationship and exchange between cultures. But, even more, intercultural learning is based on the readiness to make the encounter with other cultures productive, to gain greater awareness of one's own culture, to be able to relativise one's own culture and explore new ways of coexistence and cooperation with other cultures… This is not only a body of knowledge and skills (e.g. how to communicate through both verbal and non-verbal language, how to greet, how to eat), but also a state of mind that develops a greater capacity for tolerance and ambiguity, an openness to different values and behaviours. It does not always imply accepting and taking the different values as one's own, but acquiring the flexibility of seeing them as they are in the context of another cultural filter, not through one's own ethnocentred frame.

In an educational context it is important to note that interculturalism affects both the "other" and the "self". In addition to knowledge about other cultures, inter-culturalism also includes a better understanding of one's own culture in the light of various reference systems (Council of Europe 2003:34).

Implications for intercultural education

Multiculturalism and interculturalism in education are two separate ideas:

> There have traditionally been two approaches: multicultural education and intercultural education. Multicultural education uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance, or at least tolerance, of these cultures. Intercultural education aims to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together

in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different cultural groups. (UNESCO 2007:18)

It has to be noted, though, that in a multicultural setting groups do not always have a fixed and homogeneous cultural identity to be respected and protected in its originality, but that "learning to live together" may also imply the development and intensification of pluralistic positions within such groups. It may also mean that mutual influence and adaptation between the various groups – "learning from each other" – may, and probably will, occur under the favourable conditions created by intercultural education.

It is essential for the educational establishment to discuss these processes in multicultural schools or classrooms and to develop practices that enable learners to participate in cultural exchange and to understand and negotiate their own position in the multicultural context.

4.4. Majority and minority cultures, inclusion vs. exclusion

The term "minority" is used to refer to:

> four different categories of groups: (1) autochthonous or indigenous peoples, whose line of descent can be traced to the aboriginal inhabitants of the country … (2) territorial minorities, groups with a long cultural tradition … (3) non-territorial minorities or nomads, groups with no particular attachment to a territory … (4) immigrants." (UNESCO 2007:16)

> The term "minority culture" generally refers to the culture of marginalized or vulnerable groups who live in the shadow of majority populations with a different and dominant cultural ideology, the "majority culture". (UNESCO 1995: 57)

> Some countries, although comprising a number of minority populations have in the wake of nation building, been based on a monocultural and monolingual orientation based on a notion of homogeneous population often influenced by a dominant elite. In these cases national unity and commonality is emphasised with assimilation of minority populations as a result. The view of immigration and "the immigrant" is changing over time, from a requirement of adaptation to national norms in terms of culture, language, outlooks and general behaviour, to an increasing recognition of rights to be different with emphasis on integration or inclusion in a pluralist society and school. (Arnesen 2008:13)

> 21st century society is multicultural in essence. Yet different cultures do not have the same possibilities for survival or expression in the modern world. In the context of political conflict and constantly changing environments, they evolve and adapt, with some more open to change. This can leave others, especially minority cultures, exposed to loss and impoverishment. Their values and structures may be weakened as they enter into a more globalized world. Given that cultural diversity and cultural heritage are so important to the survival of cultures and knowledge, intercultural education policy has an important role to play in ensuring their continued vitality. (UNESCO 2007:15-16)

Within societies there exist a wide range of ways of dealing with otherness and difference. Attitudes towards otherness and difference indicate the degree

of acceptance of the individual of or by a group or the relationship of minority groups to the majority group. Bennett et al. (2004)[3] distinguishes between ethnocentric attitudes (denial/defence/minimalisation) and ethno-relative attitudes (acceptance/adaptation/integration).

In their effect on the minority group these attitudes may result in exclusion (for example marginalisation or segregation) at one end of the scale and in various forms of inclusion (assimilation, adaptation or integration) at the other end.

Intercultural education aims to avoid ethnocentric attitudes and to promote ethno-relative ones. For this reason, the assimilation of minority groups into the majority group cannot be the aim of intercultural education. On the contrary, if human rights are to be taken seriously we have to ensure that minority groups are protected and get a fair chance of adaptation (participation in society with their own distinctive characteristics) or integration (the individual independently determines his or her relations to the cultural context(s)).

Implications for intercultural education

In a multicultural teaching and learning context the evolution in attitudes from denial to integration cannot be regarded as something which can be achieved step-by-step in the classroom. A complex classroom setting may bring together learners at very different stages of development when it comes to their sensitivity, their cognitive skills, attitudes and linguistic skills. Even within the individual learner various development stages for different intercultural aspects may be found at a given point in time.

Intercultural education in a multicultural setting, therefore, tries to make learners aware of the underlying causes for ethnocentric positions (lack or fragmentation of information or the distortion of information) and their implications (how we look at others "through our own socio-cultural glasses" or use stereotypes to make judgements and develop prejudices and treat "the others" accordingly). Intercultural education tries to provide learners with an opportunity to develop competences that are the prerequisite of approaches to the various ethno-relative stages.

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3. Bennett's scheme looks at interaction in business and the economy rather than intercultural exchanges in schools and it is based on some implicit assumptions (for example that with the different steps "in the right direction", that is to say from defence towards integration, the individual eventually becomes a "better member of society" and that "integration" for all members in a multicultural society is more desirable and better than "adaptation"). Nevertheless, the categories help us to understand the different attitudes which can be found in a multicultural setting, for example in a classroom where students from various socio-cultural backgrounds live and learn together.

4.5. Stereotypes

Definition

There is no generally accepted definition of the term "stereotype", since all the academic disciplines that deal with it (for example sociology, psychology, linguistics) have developed their own definitions. The definition used by sociologists appears to be the most appropriate for our discussion. According to sociologists, stereotypes are based on demarcation and the establishment of distinct categories of properties and behaviour attributed to groups of persons. Stereotypes may result from underlying value systems (originating from religion, nationalism, and so on) or external characteristics of appearance (for example age, gender, ethnic group, dress, bearing, etc.) and may serve as indicators of expected behaviour. Stereotypes are always charged with emotions and imply judgement (positive: appreciation and admiration, or negative: prejudice and depreciation).

For that reason, and because they are highly independent of personal experience, stereotypes are resistant to change and are hardly affected by rational arguments.

The origin of stereotypes

Stereotypes are formed by various factors at different levels.

At the overall socio-political and socio-cultural level:

– these are factors that have their origin, for example, in the historical development of political relations between one's own country and another country or countries, where "the others" come from (national stereotypes).

At institutional level:

– in institutions and areas of general socialisation, such as the family/social milieu/peer group/work/school/media/personal experiences, opinions and convictions concerning the "image of the others" are passed on.

At an individual level:

– factors such as age, gender, general knowledge of the world, special knowledge and experience, intellectual capacities, interest and motivation, may play a role in our individual view of "the others". It is obvious that even in a given socio-culture the "view of the others" may vary considerably according to these individual factors.

As a consequence, by the time we begin to go to school all these factors have influenced and formed our view of "the others" (cf. Byram and Esarte-Sarries 1991; Hufeisen and Lindemann 1998; Barrett 2007). They probably have a much stronger effect on creating the "image of otherness and difference" and forming opinions and attitudes than learning together in a multicultural setting or learning a foreign language at school might ever have. Teaching and learning together in a multicultural setting, therefore, does not "start from zero", but rather must take into account and deal with the "bits and pieces" of information, experience and preformed views (fantasies, stereotypes, etc.) about "the others" in the minds of the learners.

The process of categorisation and abstraction

In order to come to terms with the overwhelming influx of information – also concerning our own world – when we are integrating new and unfamiliar phenomena and thereby expanding our knowledge and evaluating new experiences, we have to categorise and abstract information. There is no doubt that the "world in our minds" is not identical with the world around us. We have to select, focus, structure, categorise and generalise what "comes in" through our senses. And in doing so we develop means to come to terms with the outside world and by abstracting our experiences "construct" units and structures that help us to find our way through the "chaos". Such generalisations are essential for us to deal with the outside world.

Cognitive psychology has made us aware of the fact that we transform what we perceive of the outside world into concepts (cognitive units which underlie entities of meaning, like words) or propositions (clusters of concepts combined to form more complex structures).

We may store knowledge and experience in different ways:

– in the form of frames (the abstract organisation of knowledge, like word families or word fields);

– in the form of schemas (more complex networks of propositions in a highly systematised way, like "traffic");

– in the form of scripts (modelling concrete sequences of actions and episodes, like "going shopping" or "travelling");

– in the form of prototypical representations (the "best example" of a group of objects that belong to the same collective term: in German the "best example" of a tree is a beech or a spruce while in Greece it is an olive tree or a palm tree) (cf. Aitchison 1994; Kleiber 1993; Taylor 2003).

As long as we stay in our own world, what we experience and know about its objects, its underlying values, about attitudes and sets of behaviour seems "normal" to us.

Therefore, it is quite "normal" that when crossing the borders of our own socio-cultural field of experience and dealing with "otherness", we try to use the same modes of perception and apply the same categorisations, abstractions, arrangements and structures we are familiar with from our own world. This means that at first glance we cannot perceive "otherness" other than "through our own socio-cultural glasses" (Neuner 2003:42).

It has to be emphasised that what we relate to when discussing encounters with "otherness and difference" is just an extension of the same processes that we experience when dealing with our own world.

Implications for intercultural education

It would be useless to tell learners "stereotypes are bad". Stereotypes must not be repressed but they must be discussed. Talking about stereotypes (and prejudices) in a multicultural group is essential for mutual understanding. But this requires an atmosphere of mutual trust and empathy.

4.6. Interim worlds

According to constructivism (cf. Wolff 1994; Bostock 1998) the perception of the outside world is not processed by our senses, but by our brain. The world in our minds is not a copy or duplicate of the world around us but a constructive entity which we create and test in our social communities.

As a consequence, in intercultural encounters in our imagination we generate an "inner vision of otherness" – by direct contact with "the others" or by contact with other worlds via the media – and thereby establish an interim world in which our own world and the world(s) of the others are interwoven. In an encounter with "otherness" we at first individually arrange an "inner stage" and enact fictional scenes with the help of the "properties" (frames, schemas, scripts, prototypes, etc.) of our own world.

If the categories we apply from our own world are not sufficient to help us to come to terms with "otherness" we:

– either rearrange and reinterpret them until they "fit";

– or ignore and forget them (they find no "anchoring ground" in our memory);

– or we isolate them as "foreign elements" which we find disturbing or even threatening,

if substantial aspects of our own norms are at stake (e.g. taboos) (cf. Byram and Esarte-Sarries 1991; Farr and Moscovici 1984).

Implications for intercultural education

In a multicultural educational setting information about "the others", observations of them and interaction with them, may take place "in reality", but it is in the interim world, in participants' minds, where the negotiation about positions (acceptance or depreciation) takes place and where attitudes and opinions are formed and valued. Obviously, stereotypes about ourselves (auto-stereotype) and "the others" (hetero-stereotype) form "pillars" in this interim world, while individual differences of knowledge and experience, mainly with aspects of schemas and scripts, provide for the dynamic character of interaction.

The fact that interim worlds are unstable and liable to change provides an opportunity for education. There are two distinct development phases. In our first encounter with a foreign world we rely heavily on categories from our own world in order to come to terms with otherness. In a second phase when we receive more information or integrate new experiences with the foreign world we may become aware that the "scenario of the interim world" is open and flexible. The prerequisites for this shift are the development of specific competencies and attitudes.

4.7. Culture and language

> Language is one of the most universal and diverse forms of expressions of human culture, and perhaps even the most essential one. It is at the heart of issues of identity, memory and the transmission of knowledge … Language issues are central to culture. Languages result from a collective and historical experience and express culturally specific worldviews and value systems … Language issues are also central to concepts of education. Linguistic competencies are fundamental for the empowerment of the individual in democratic and plural societies, as they condition school achievements, promote access to other cultures and encourage openness to cultural exchange. (UNESCO 2007:13)

Implications for intercultural education

> In classrooms today, in nearly every country of the world, multilingualism is the rule rather than the exception. The linguistic identity and self-confidence of pupils who represent small minority languages will be strengthened if their language gets a certain space within teaching. For teachers, on the other hand, multilingual classrooms are a big challenge, and

in a number of countries legislative and special provisions have been installed to meet the pupils' needs, both with respect to the learner's language history and the learner's need to acquire language skills in order to follow the teaching. This represents great challenges for teacher education programmes. (UNESCO 2007:15)

The language of schooling is a basic instrument of interaction and integration within a concept of intercultural education which emphasises strategic competencies when it comes to negotiating identity and difference.

5. Elements of a framework of intercultural education

5.1. Principles of intercultural education

The UNESCO guidelines (2007:32ff) establish three general principles for intercultural education, which may serve as comprehensive objectives:

Principle I: Intercultural Education respects the cultural identity of the learner through the provision of culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all.

Principle II: Intercultural Education provides every learner with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to achieve active and full participation in society.

Principle III: Intercultural Education provides all learners with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations.

5.2. The profile of intercultural education
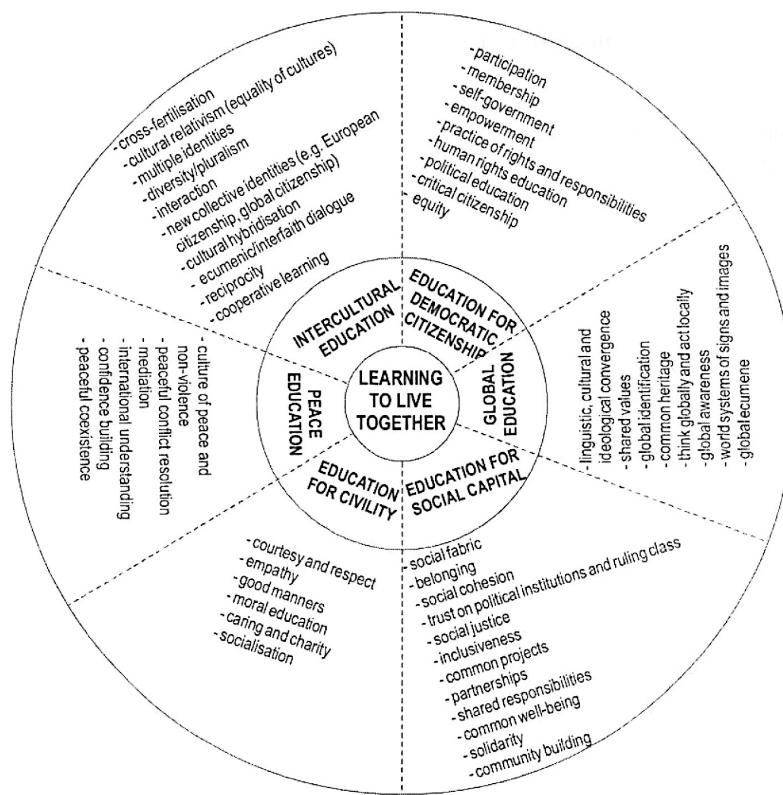
The International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (Delors 1996) launched a project called "Learning to live together". Its aims are shared by the Council of Europe and all international partner organisations and institutions.

Its vision is that, in a highly globalised society, individuals, groups and communities should refer to human rights as the basis of living together.

It presupposes six educational processes:
– education for civility;
– peace education;
– education for democratic citizenship;
– intercultural education;
– global education;
– education for social capital (Council of Europe 2003:18).

In this intercultural education profile a number of aspects are derived from the overall objective of "learning to live together":

– cross-fertilisation (learning and benefiting from each other);

– cultural relativism (equality of cultures, no discrimination);

– multiple identities (development of a personal identity which draws on more than one culture);

– diversity/pluralism (no discrimination and exclusion, but creative use of pluralism and mutual acceptance of diversity);

– interaction (joint learning, negotiation of intercultural questions and conflicts);

– new collective identities (European citizenship, global citizenship);

– cultural hybridisation (development of values, attitudes and ways of living together that benefit from cultural pluralism);

– ecumenical/interfaith dialogue (communication across religious communities);

– co-operative learning (learning together and learning from each other, project work, etc.).

In order to clarify this intercultural education profile it helps to observe it in the light of the processes which characterise its different parts, for instance:

– peace education strives for international understanding and peaceful coexistence based on mutual confidence with the aim of establishing peace and non-violence by developing ways of negotiating conflict resolution and mediation;

– education for democratic citizenship aims at political education (critical citizenship and self-responsibility, active participation in democratic processes/self-government) on the basis of human rights and equity;

– education for civility envisages an "inclusive society" which on the basis of moral education is geared at getting along with each other in a courteous way, showing good manners, respect, empathy, charity and caring for each other.

It is clear that the various aspects of the six processes overlap and that the concept of intercultural education is comprehensive and is enriched by these other educational processes.

There is a global vision at the core of this project. It is the emergence of "a more caring society showing more solidarity, capable of abating the negative effects of individualism, marginalisation and social exclusion. It is a society characterised by a high level of social capital, solidarity and co-operation. In this society, democracy is not just a political organisation or form of governance. It is seen as a way of life, or as Dewey put it 'an associative living' based on community, communication and interdependence" (Council of Europe 2003:18).

5.3. Learning to live together: the comprehensive objective of intercultural education

In the Delors Report to UNESCO (1996) a number of distinct, but closely related objectives for education in the future are identified:

– learning to live together;

– learning to know;

– learning to do;

– learning to be.

Among these objectives learning to live together is the "centre of attention" (p. 18) and for that reason may be regarded as the comprehensive objective of intercultural learning in a multicultural environment. It comprises "developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence … in a spirit of

respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding, … peace and cultural diversity. In short, the learner needs to acquire knowledge, skills and values that contribute to a spirit of solidarity and co-operation among diverse individuals and groups in society" (UNESCO 2007:20).

5.4. Cognitive, affective and pragmatic dimensions

If we apply the categories we are familiar with from curriculum development for defining objectives, intercultural competence can be further classified in three established dimensions:

– the cognitive dimension (knowledge): learning to know;

– the affective dimension (attitudes/values): learning to be; and

– the pragmatic dimension (skills): learning to do.

The cognitive dimension: "learning to know"

"Learning to know" in terms of intercultural education comprises more than knowledge about other countries and cultures taught in various school subjects (for example, geography, history and languages). From the intercultural education perspective all information that helps us to understand and appreciate each other in a multicultural setting is as important as anything traditional school subjects have to offer.

On the one hand the cognitive dimension comprises factual knowledge of all the different aspects at play in a school or class (values and norms, traditions, religion, works of arts, culture with a "big C"), as well as daily routines and rituals (culture with a "little c"). On the other hand it also comprises strategic knowledge of how to negotiate intercultural encounters in the classroom (self-representation, dealing with misunderstandings and misinterpretations, dealing with conflicts, learning to co-operate, etc.).

The affective dimension: learning to be

Intercultural education must support learners in developing an awareness and appreciation of their own cultural background(s), as well as respect and tolerance of the "otherness of the others". This must be based on equality and on the right to be different.

The pragmatic dimension: learning to do

"Learning to do" is more than acquiring occupational skills or mastering everyday situations. In intercultural education it means learning to activate and apply

factual and strategic knowledge in situations where intercultural questions are to be negotiated and tasks need to be solved co-operatively.

5.5. Three courses of action in intercultural education

The educational process "learning to live together" can take three different forms (Council of Europe 2003: 36 f):

Learning from differences

This implies three principles:

– focus on differences, not on common features which means openness towards what is different and unknown;

– cultural relativism, that is to say equality of cultures, implying that the values and norms of one culture cannot be used to judge other cultures;

– reciprocity, which means exchanges, interaction and mutual trust.

Learning from controversies and conflicts

Intercultural education is not always a smooth and harmonious process. In a similar manner to interpersonal encounters, it may engender tensions, pressure, frustration, opposition, and even cultural clashes. Naturally, any situation in which goals diverge, contradict each other or seem incompatible with one another may generate conflicts, be they conflicts of interest, moral conflicts or intergeneration conflicts. As Galtung (2002:5; quoted in: Council of Europe 2003:38) points out, "the key issue is not to avoid the conflict as this is an inherent outcome of diversity, but to prevent the settling of a conflict through violence, in other words by force and aggression".

For this reason, one of the essential objectives of intercultural education is the development of strategies for negotiating conflicts.

Interactive learning

> Learning to live together is an example of interactive learning. It goes beyond traditional social learning (learning by imitation) and is more than just a source of individual socialisation. Togetherness implies another type of social learning, which unlike classical approaches (Bandura, Lewin, Mucchielli) focuses no longer on the individual but on collective entities. Furthermore, most social and educational goals (inclusion, solidarity, interaction, community building, joint responsibility, participatory management, global awareness) cannot be achieved by isolated individuals, but only through learning together: through the joint development of knowledge, deliberative reasoning, common projects and collective problem solving. Learning takes place not only in the minds of individual learners but also in their social and cultural environment. (Council of Europe 2003:42, footnote 62)

There are three types of collective learning (Council of Europe 2003, footnote 63):

– learning in networks – networks are highly dynamic because they involve exchanges, reciprocity and common activities, the members of a network associate temporarily to solve issues (a meeting of the whole network is quite rare);

– learning in teams – teams are task-oriented and more structured than networks, they are created to solve a particular issue and are disbanded when their work is done;

– learning in communities – communities are informal groups spontaneously brought together as a joint-venture of people who wish to live together.

5.6. Competencies and attitudes

It is clear that "learning to live together" not only requires the development of knowledge about the socio-cultural backgrounds of the learners involved, but also the development of knowledge and skills for negotiating otherness and difference. Social psychologists (cf. Krappmann 1969) have described a number of competencies and attitudes also essential for negotiating identity in society. These can be further developed for intercultural learning.

Empathy

This implies venturing into the world of "the others" and trying to understand it "from within". Trying to understand "the others" in their own socio-cultural contexts means realising that what may look strange to oneself may be perfectly normal for them.

Empathy helps us to understand and accept "the otherness of others". It comprises cognitive and affective aspects.

Role distance and decentring

Role distance means another change of perspective: the "view from outside" upon our own world. This helps us to realise that not all people share our view of our own world and, as a consequence, may have opinions about us which to us appear as stereotypes or prejudice. Decentring can be understood as the ability to step outside of one's own frame of reference. Role distance and decentring help us to gather different perspectives about ourselves.

Tolerance of ambiguity

It is sometimes hard to bear the fact that "others are different from us" or that one is unable to give definite answers. One of the major aims of the intercultural

approach, therefore, is the development of strategies for negotiating ambiguity and coming to terms with otherness and difference.

Awareness of self and representation of identity

This implies a heightened awareness in learners of the socio-cultural foundations of their own world that influence their world view (traditions, values, judgements), regulate their daily life (routines, rituals, life style), shape their mentality and attitudes, and their ability to relate this self-awareness to others. It also implies the ability to present this identity to others.

Emotional openness (dimensione oblativa)

One of the prerequisites of intercultural education is openness and a readiness to relate to others in the multicultural group. In a multicultural setting some participants may withdraw and only "come out" if they feel that they are accepted and received with warmth. Intercultural education seeks to develop tolerance, respect and trust in the group.

Multiperspectivity

In a multicultural learning environment it is essential that students learn to take into account all perspectives and listen to contrasting opinions when dealing with different issues. Multiperspectivity is closely related to centring/decentring.

Relinquishing centre stage

In a multicultural group there will always be participants who try to dominate and others who assume a wait-and-see attitude (because they are shy or they do not feel accepted). Intercultural education tries to develop a balance between these extremes: every participant should "stay in the circle", but some should "move closer to the centre", while others should learn to step back from a dominant position.

Language competence

It is obvious that in the concept of intercultural education language clearly plays a prominent role. Here we first refer to the language of the learners' own cultural background (their "mother tongue") which contributes to shaping their identity. Its further development must not be overlooked or neglected, since it is the basis and anchorage ground of plurilingual competences.

On the other hand in the school setting reference is made to the language in which teaching and learning takes place. This comprises two aspects: taking in information and knowledge (the language of instruction) and mastering the role of participant in the multicultural and multilingual classroom (interaction/negotiation).

There is no doubt that language competence is crucial for the success of intercultural education.

5.7. The etiquette of intercultural communication

From these competences we may derive a few conclusions and discuss and establish rules for communication in a multicultural group:[4]

Rule 1: Refrain from automatic interpretations, assumptions and judgements
Rule 2: Step outside your frame of reference
Rule 3: Be ready to explain the obvious
Rule 4: Listen and ask questions
Rule 5: Apply your skill of critical thinking
Rule 6: Exchange and discuss value judgements
Rule 7: Focus on solutions, not problems

6. New environments and ways of learning and teaching

6.1. At school level: governance and management

Schools are already often places where locals, foreigners, migrants, refugees or expatriates come into contact, be they adults or children. What schools must now do is develop into hubs of intercultural encounter, co-operation and learning. This requires schools' involvement both when it comes to their internal development and their governance by district or regional authorities. In both cases broad visions of educational leadership geared to capacity building within schools and to the agency of schools within local communities are called for.

School inclusion policies need to promote the empowerment, commitment and contribution of all those involved in school improvement. This means the involvement not just of the different stakeholders (pupils, teachers, parents, management), but the different cultural groups as well. In this way, intercultural encounter and learning become both the means and the aims of the internal development and change process and constitute the building blocks of the school as a "site of

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4. This list of rules is taken from an unpublished communication by Josef Huber at the conference "Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue for a Euro-Mediterranean Education. Knowledge Building and Networking". Barcelona, 29 November to 2 December 2006.

citizenship" in which everyone has the opportunity to learn to be responsible for intercultural action (Jensen and Schnack 1994). They also learn to participate in different communities and society as a whole.

The "action competence" of pupils thus relies heavily on the adults they come into contact with serving as role models. Teachers and school management must first and foremost be active and committed intercultural learners themselves, both professionally and in their personal lives. It also entails the development and implementation of strategies to support the voices of pupils and parents in intercultural dialogue, both amongst themselves and with the school, by offering settings, opportunities, challenges, means of communication and resources, and the authentic acknowledgment of what they have to say.

Planning educational provision and support so that schools can become community catalysts for intercultural learning also brings issues of equity and social justice to the fore for local and regional authorities. In order to foster the recognition of self-worth and the valuing of others within multicultural communities, the provision of "equal opportunities" is insufficient when there are no real options of equality among the people within these communities. In education this means equality of condition, in terms of enablement and empowerment through resources, power, respect and recognition, care and solidarity (Lynch and Baker 2005). As "the enemy of improvement is inertia", local authorities "must do more than just stay out of the way" (Fullan 2001:175) of schools. They must delegate action and responsibility. Besides working to facilitate equality of condition, local authorities can also help schools set up inter-visitation schemes and peer networks focusing on community action for intercultural dialogue.

The Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education has established an "education policy agenda for the 21st century" which also covers intercultural education (Council of Europe 2003:55-56). The agenda contains the following recommendations for the governance and management of schools which are worth considering:

– promote culturally responsive governance and management that goes beyond adding a multicultural flavour to the formal curriculum (this entails network governance, participatory management and horizontal and non-hierarchical relations among stakeholders);

– enhance responsible and inclusive decision making, based on well-documented and rational arguments as well as on credible evaluations resulting from objective data;

– create an atmosphere of trust, ownership and common responsibility between teachers themselves, teachers and students and between schools and communities;

– involve ethnic minority parents in school activities and collective decision making (as full and equal members of school boards, as volunteers for outdoor activities, as mentors and tutors, as guest speakers or resource persons);

– provide co-operative learning opportunities in every school year for structured open group discussion and experiential activities that encourage interdependence rather than competition and hierarchy;

– address diversity and interculturality in institutional development, for example, in mission statements, action plans, self-improvement schemes, enrolment and recruitment policies;

– practise a site-based management, which is favourable for local problem solving, culturally responsive decision making and diversity-friendly measures;

– encourage values clarification and communication, team building, dialogue and mutual understanding to increase the cohesiveness and self-reliance of educational institutions;

– organise schools and universities as "learning communities";

– promote integrated, mixed and heterogeneous settings to reduce the social distance between students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds;

– create a "diversity task force" in the school or university community to address the current issues of governance and management and comprising representatives of various stakeholders;

– stimulate participation in student councils, advisory and governing bodies in order to promote student involvement in democratic and responsible decision making;

– empower stakeholders to identify and eliminate any institutional discrimination as well as hidden forms of prejudice and marginalisation;

– avoid hidden or indirect segregation through the massive enrolment of ethnic minority students in special classes, catch-up or placement programmes as these could become a structural form of discrimination in the name of "special needs" and cultural difference;

– provide counselling, pastoral care and student development services to help students address conflict issues, discrimination, peer pressure, frustration or personal deprivation, and create mediation teams of students in order to address conflicts;

– include hidden curriculum, school ethos, organisational culture and school life as criteria for quality indicators, and add democracy learning goals in university and school self-evaluation schemes;

– use self-analytical and reflective methods to help educational institutions improve;

– have internal decision making rely on multiple sources (administrative documents, statistical data, mass media, NGOs, parents) and use a variety of inquiry methods and techniques (including surveys, scholastic achievement tests, observation, peer reviews, qualitative research, scrutiny of community representatives).

6.2. In the classroom

Intercultural education, like democracy, "cannot be mass delivered to the classroom, through a didactic transmission similar to that of classic school subjects" (Council of Europe 2003:20). Apart from "information about the others" it develops on the basis of direct practice and personal experiences we have when we "live and learn together" and learn to deal with each other with courtesy and respect, empathy, good manners, caring and charity.

As the main objective of intercultural education, "learning to live together" may be attained at various levels in the classroom.

The selection of specific topics

Topics related to the multilingual context of education (comparing languages, comparing the cultural implications of the meaning of words and of non-verbal communication, or discussing the specific role of certain languages, for example the lingua-franca role of English) and the perspectives of plurilingualism ("me and my languages") should be introduced in a multilingual class. Obviously, there are some school subjects that lend themselves more readily to adaptation, such as history, geography, political/social sciences and languages. But the intercultural perspective can also contribute to the selection of topics and examples in other subjects (for instance music, mathematics, natural sciences).

The development of new learner-oriented methods of teaching and learning

The following is a list of ideas which can be used to develop learner-orientated methods of teaching and learning:

- encouraging explorative learning to motivate the learner and increase his feeling of responsibility for the outcomes of his own learning process;

- project-oriented learning – learning to co-operate in groups and teams;

- learning to benefit from diversity – co-operating with each other (for example, through a system of mutual help where everybody contributes his or her "strengths");

- learning to negotiate positions and views;

- role play – taking over and experimenting with new positions in conflicts as a means of raising awareness and developing role distance and empathy;

- using fictional texts (such as short stories, fairy tales, poems) with intercultural aspects which stimulate the creation of the interim world, or creating such texts to symbolically deal with conflicts;

- the development of strategies for negotiating otherness and difference, such as the development of a specific profile of linguistic proficiency in the language of the intercultural environment that is needed for interaction and negotiation.

6.3. Curriculum development

The structure of traditional school curriculums follows a certain model. After a preamble declaring the "comprehensive and higher values of education" the teaching matter for the various subjects is presented as "objectives" and a progression (portioned in school years) according to the complexity of the subject matter. A third part contains instructions for the teacher about how to teach and how to qualify the achievements of the learners.

Intercultural education cannot and will not do away with general value-orientation within school subjects, teaching methods and so forth. However, it will review and extend all three curriculum parts according to its guidelines and principles.

The Standing Conference of the European Ministers of Education (Council of Europe 2003:54f.) recommend considering the following aspects when developing curricula:

- provide diverse learning opportunities to meet various needs, interests, abilities and cultural backgrounds;

- include intercultural education as a curriculum objective at all levels of formal education;

- promote non-centric curricula based on the principles of non-discrimination, pluralism and cultural relativism;

- create deliberate and explicit intercultural learning situations, such as encounters with the unknown, the foreign, the different or the "other";

- look at cultural differences in a meaningful context and promote the ideas of learning from differences, multiperspectivity, remembrance and reconciliation;

- encourage school-based curriculum development, which takes into account local needs and conditions as well as cultural specificities;

- extend the range of choices and options, including alternative private provision, without affecting the core curriculum or the overall cohesion of education delivery;

- include the social skills and competencies necessary for democracy learning, for example the ability to take part in a public debate, to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner, to build coalitions and co-operate with others, to communicate and sustain a dialogue, to take responsible decisions, to build a common project, to develop a critical mind and to compare models and statements;

- provide opportunities for multicultural delivery, intercultural communication and for students to be exposed to other cultures;

- measure academic achievements in citizenship-related subjects (civics, history, social studies, political sciences);

- value intercultural encounters and experiential learning situations occasioned by non-formal education (exchanges, visits, projects, early practice of democratic culture and so on);

- include specialised modules and training programmes as well as cross-curricular topics including a European dimension.

6.4. Teacher qualifications: competences

In order for intercultural education to be a success the teacher's role and tasks are extended considerably. Teachers can no longer simply be seen as "transmitters of subject matter", but must also act as guides and aids to self-development and successful interaction. To meet the specific demands of intercultural education, teachers need not only to be experts in their respective subjects, but they must also have deeper qualifications in general pedagogy.

It is obvious that in intercultural education teachers are an integral part of the multicultural setting. As a consequence, all the aspects outlined in the previous chapters play an important role, not only in the education of the pupils but also in the education of teachers.

These competences are defined in the concept of competence development adopted by the Pestalozzi Programme of the Council of Europe for training and learning opportunities as follows (this concept was developed in discussions within the Network of Trainers of the Pestalozzi Programme, notably by Ferenc Arato, Pascale Mompoint-Gaillard and Josef Huber):

– the development of sensitivity and awareness means raising trainees' sensitivity to intercultural matters and engaging them to deploy empathy (feeling);

– the development of knowledge and understanding means raising trainees' consciousness of intercultural matters and developing understanding and knowledge of the issue (understanding);

– the development of individual practice means raising trainees' effectiveness, efficiency and fairness when acting in an intercultural setting (acting);

– the development of societal practice means helping trainees to be more proactive and constructive and to move from individual practice to action that shapes societal practice (co-operating).

According to the recommendations of the European ministers of education (Council of Europe 2003:56f) the following aspects are vital when training teachers in intercultural education:

– diversity and social sensitivity programmes should be provided for teachers, administrators, support staff, head teachers, trainee teachers and other education staff;

– professional training of teachers must address both proactive goals (such as how to build a learning community) as well as responsive needs (for example, conflict resolution);

– diversity training, cultural responsiveness along with quality requirements should be included in staff development schemes (for instance through a range of incentives and professional development requirements);

– intercultural competence, in both pre-service and in-service training, should be fostered, paying particular attention to intercultural sensitivity, communication skills and cultural awareness training, as well as learning how to provide a democratic and unbiased learning environment for students;

– teachers should be trained to develop teaching materials which enhance culturally responsive education, and they should be equipped across different subject areas with methods and resources that support deliberative learning, critical understanding, team work, conflict management and multiperspectivity especially in teaching controversial and sensitive issues;

– teachers should be encouraged to guarantee a safe learning environment for students and to deal with difficult situations that might arise (verbal threats, sexual intimidation, bullying, teasing or even physical violence) in informal and interpersonal encounters;

– quality assurance should promote reflective teachers and practitioners who are prepared to continue their self-development;

– built-in and school-based teacher training is necessary in order to address locally significant issues such as cultural specificities, community development or particular training needs;

– the role of the teacher in a multicultural class should be reviewed, starting from the assumption that teaching is not just knowledge transmission, but the sum of new roles such as mediator, counsellor, manager, partner, mentor, coach, learning facilitator, human rights activist, member of a task group or of a learning community;

– teachers need to be prepared to promote and evaluate non-cognitive, values-related and citizenship education goals, which means learning to work with different attitudes, skills and social behaviours, to use non-text didactic tools and to value informal and non-formal learning situations;

– it is necessary to train teachers to evaluate students' previous cultural and social experiences and to assess their specific learning needs (such as their language and civic competencies, social distance, organisational deficits);

– teachers should be trained to make use of digital technology to encourage student participation, online collaborative learning and collective knowledge building.

7. Conclusion: Are we prepared for such a change of perspectives in education?

Our enthusiasm for intercultural education as a core concept for the further development of an inclusive society must not lead us to assume that the need for such a radical change of educational perspectives is equally felt by all those that work in the field of education.

The reasons for education professionals' scepticism may be manifold. In some countries the changes described in the first part of this essay, which have profoundly altered certain societies, have not yet had the same impact. For these countries there may not seem to be any immediate need to change the paradigms of education. In more tradition-oriented parts of society the readiness to abandon what has been valued, and to accept and deal with change is less pronounced than in more progressive ones. Moreover, it has always been difficult for society's "haves" to share with the "have-nots".

Changes in democratic societies inevitably require a long and sometimes complicated process of discussion and the negotiation of positions and values. This process is necessary if tolerant attitudes and the readiness to learn from difference are to be developed, that is to say if the vision of "living together in peace" is to come true.

Many practising teachers grew up and were educated in a monocultural and monolingual setting and they find the changes that they are experiencing in their environment and daily work – the spread of multicultural schools and classes and, as a consequence, the lack of homogeneity and the dominance of diversity – disturbing and discouraging. This is because quite often such changes go hand in hand with the development of prejudice, exclusion, withdrawal, aggression, conflict and the rejection of co-operation. These changes affect every teacher personally and for this reason there is a need for teachers to redefine their own reference points and their professional role.

Since teachers play such a major role in preparing young generations to become citizens of a world which will inevitably become more multicultural in the future, it is crucial that we win over their hearts and minds to intercultural education.

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Towards indicators for intercultural understanding

Katarzyna Karwacka-Vögele

Introduction

Indicators of success in intercultural education play a significant role in the development and improvement of intercultural learning. Despite the existence of numerous resources it is not easy to find a document which integrates all the factors needed to evaluate intercultural education and to make a contribution to its improvement. In addition, many components of intercultural learning are difficult to measure and cannot be assessed in a quantitative way (such as levels of empathy or tolerance of ambiguity).

For these reasons there is an urgent need for a transparent list of indicators outlining different ways of assessing success. I propose dividing the indicators into two categories: personal and institutional.

Personal indicators comprise a set of questions addressed to individuals and are divided into four categories: personal values and skills, interpersonal relationship building, intercultural knowledge and sensitivity, and global issues awareness. The questions can be answered in two ways:

– the retrospective approach – which allows one to contemplate previous inter-cultural experiences and analyse one's actions, thoughts, points of view and attitudes at that time;

– the instant approach – in which one reflects on one's present actions and ways of thinking.

The institutional indicators could consist of various questions to be answered by the institutions' stakeholders. The questions in this part could be analysed at four levels: country level, school level, curriculum development level and teacher education level. When answering the questions educational factors such as the content of the curricula, the structure of programmes or the organisation of teaching and student performance should be examined.

In order to assure that the study of the indicators is not perfunctory and that the results of the evaluation are relevant, the following steps should be considered when answering the questions:

– giving detailed and well-thought-out answers, which should include information about the extent to which the indicators are fulfilled, why they are not fulfilled, what we can do to fulfil them and so on;

– avoiding "yes" or "no" responses as they do not indicate the reason for the present state;

– thinking about ways of using the results of the analysis of the indicators to transform the teaching of intercultural education and then making an effort to fulfil the goals set;

– studying the indicators more than once.

The indicators for success in intercultural education can be applied (both in the personal and the institutional approach) in four different ways:

– as an evaluation tool – providing information about the level of intercultural education development, its weakest and strongest points;

– as a source of reflection – encouraging to rethink values, behaviours or to give educational programmes, goals and achievements more thought;

– as a source of motivation – implying that some areas have certain deficiencies and for that reason various improvement strategies should be designed;

– as a set of guidelines – which provide assistance in putting together successful intercultural education programmes (carrying out smaller tasks and avoiding mistakes at the same time).

Personal indicators

Personal values and skills	Am I aware of my own world view? Do I reappraise my values and emphasise my capabilities? Am I open to discovering new aspects of my identity? Do I take responsibility for myself and my own actions? Do I think creatively and critically? Do I put less emphasis on material than nonmaterial things?
Interpersonal relationship building	Am I sensitive to others? Do I have long-lasting relationships with people from other cultures? Am I able to adapt to changing social circumstances? Do I respect and value human diversity? Do I enjoy myself in the company of others?

Intercultural knowledge and sensitivity	Am I aware and appreciative of my own cultural background and do I know its cultural limits?
	Am I aware of the nature of cultural differences?
	Am I respectful and tolerant of cultural differences?
	Do I learn about other cultures and am I able to recognise links that may exist between them?
	Am I able to identify subtle aspects of my own culture?
	Do I have the flexibility to see different values as they are in the context of another cultural filter (not from my culture's perspective)?
	Am I aware of norms, customs, religions, works of art, daily routines and formal procedures in different cultures?
	Do I gather information about my roots and try to overcome any narrow local or national viewpoints at the same time?
	Am I able to communicate with others using their ways of expression?
	Do I enhance intercultural communication?
	Am I ready to open emotionally and intellectually to the foreign and unknown?
	Do I try to overcome intercultural anxiety?
	Do I feel comfortable in different cultural environments?
	Do I strive to broaden my own horizons?
	Am I able to see the world from different perspectives?
	Do I know how to negotiate intercultural encounters (for example, using self-representation, co-operation, dealing with misunderstandings and misinterpretations as well as with conflicts)?
	Do I learn to activate and apply factual and strategic knowledge in situations where intercultural questions are to be negotiated and tasks need to be solved co-operatively?
	Am I able to learn from cultural differences?
	Am I able to focus on differences as well as on on common features)?
	Do I develop cultural relativism?
	Is reciprocity something I seek to develop in my encounters with people from other cultures (through exchanges, interaction and mutual trust)?
	Am I able to gain knowledge through interactive learning?
	Do I focus on the co-development of knowledge and on collective problem solving?
	Do I develop deliberative reasoning?
	Do I work on common projects?

	Am I able to venture into the world of others, to try to adopt their position and understand it "from within"?
	Do I try to understand "others" in their own socio-cultural contexts and realise that what may look "strange" to me may be "normal" for them?
	Can I recognise and identify emotional signs?
	Can I identify different ways of communicating (in different languages or using one language in different ways)?
	Am I willing and able to co-operate with others in order to change things for the better?
	Do I develop my tolerance of ambiguity?
	Do I develop my emotional openness?
	Do I develop my multiperspectivity?
	Do I develop my centring and decentring?
	Do I develop my language competence?
	Am I able to refrain from automatic interpretations, assumptions and judgements?
	Am I able to step out of my own frame of reference?
	Am I ready to explain things which are obvious to me?
	Am I ready to listen and ask questions?
	Am I able to apply critical thinking skills?
	Do I exchange and discuss value judgements?
	Do I look for solutions, instead of focusing on problems?
	Can I develop strategies for solving and negotiating conflicts?
	Am I able to learn from controversies and conflicts?
	Do I promote the settling of conflicts through non-violent methods?
	Do I have multiple identities (do I develop my own identity by basing it on more than one culture)?
Global issues awareness	Am I able to empathise with the perspectives of people from countries other than my own?
	Am I aware of the crises facing humankind?
	Am I informed about world affairs?
	Do I know about worldwide linkages?
	Do I think about solutions to worldwide problems?
	Do I have a sense of belonging to larger communities, such as the European or the world community?

Institutional indicators

At national level	Are we working to develop co-operation between different social and ethnic groups in our country?
	Do we promote international solidarity?
	Are we exploring new forms of coexistence and co-operation with other cultures?
	Are we developing a sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies (for example through the promotion of understanding, respect and dialogue between different cultural groups)?
	Are we developing cross-fertilisation (learning and benefiting from each other)?
	Are we developing cultural relativism (the equality of cultures and non-discrimination)?
	Do we support diversity/pluralism (no discrimination and exclusion, but the creative use of pluralism and the mutual acceptance of diversity)?
	Are we developing interaction between different groups of people (through joint learning programmes or the negotiation of intercultural questions and conflicts)?
	Do we support the development of new collective identities (such as European citizenship or global citizenship)?
	Are we developing cultural hybridisation (the development of values, attitudes and ways of living together that benefit from cultural pluralism)?
	Do we promote ecumenical/interfaith dialogue (communication between religious communities)?
	Are we developing co-operative learning (learning together and learning from each other, project work and so on)?
	Are we developing indicators and tools for self-evaluation and self-focused development for educational institutions?
	Do we provide cultural activities which promote diverse cultural expression and contribute to tolerance, mutual understanding and respect?
	Do we give children and young people an opportunity to meet and interact with their peers from different cultures (in kindergartens, schools and youth clubs)?
	Do we promote co-operation and networking in the field of education and student exchanges at all levels?
	Do we promote relevant intercultural programmes and exchanges?

	Do we design regulations and policies that support intercultural exchanges (when it comes to visa requirements, work and residence permits for example)?
	Do we empower young people to actively participate in democratic processes so that they can contribute to the promotion of core values?
In schools	Are we involved in hosting foreign pupils as part of intercultural exchanges?
	Do we respect the cultural identity of our learners?
	Do we provide learners with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills in order to:
	- prepare them for active and full participation in society;
	- enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations?
	Do we encourage the empowerment, the commitment and the contribution of all pupils, parents and staff to improving the school environment?
	Do we promote the commitment of teachers, school management and students in intercultural experiences (inside and outside of the school)?
	Do we promote culturally responsive governance and management?
	Do we develop responsible and inclusive decision making?
	Do we promote an atmosphere of trust, ownership and common responsibility between all stakeholders?
	Do we involve ethnic minority parents in school activities and collective decision making?
	Do we provide co-operative learning opportunities, open group discussions and experimental activities that encourage interdependence rather than competition and hierarchy?
	Do we foster diversity and interculturality in institutional development?
	Do we provide site-based management in order to develop local problem solving, culturally responsive decision making and diversity-friendly measures?
	Does our school foster values clarification, team building, dialogue and mutual understanding?
	Do we provide an intercultural, mixed and integrated school environment in order to reduce the social distance between learners from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds?

	Do we form varied teams, including learner, staff and parent representatives, to deal with issues of governance and management?
	Do we encourage students to participate in representative councils, governing bodies and mediation teams in order to address conflicts?
	Do we promote students involvement in democratic and responsible decision making?
	Do we enable stakeholders to identify and eliminate any institutional discrimination as well as hidden forms of prejudice and marginalisation?
	Do we provide counselling, pastoral care and student development services to help address issues of conflict, discrimination, peer pressure, frustration and so on?
	Do we prevent segregation (hidden or indirect) through enrolling ethnic minority students in special classes?
	Do we include the hidden curriculum, the school's ethos, its organisational culture and school life as indicators of quality?
	Do we use self-analytical and reflective methods for institutional improvement?
	Do we organise internal decision making by relying on different sources?
	Do we promote global access to institutional life on the basis of democracy and human rights?
	Do we encourage learners to look at diverse issues such as attitudes to fellow students, the atmosphere in the school or the more informal aspects of the curriculum?
	Do we give learners an opportunity to develop their plurilingual competence?
At curriculum development level	Do we select topics which take into account the multilingual context of education?
	Do we promote new learner-orientated teaching and learning methods (for example explorative learning, project-oriented learning, role plays, learning to negotiate positions and views)?
	Do we develop methods of dealing with otherness and difference?
	Do we encourage learners to develop loyalties beyond their home and their nation?
	Do we provide students with opportunities to meet people with different needs, interests, abilities and cultural backgrounds to their own?
	Do we include intercultural education in the curriculum as an objective at all levels of formal education?

	Do we promote non-ethnocentric curricula based on the principles of non-discrimination, pluralism and cultural relativism?
	Do we create specific intercultural learning situations (for instance through encounters with the unknown)?
	Do we promote the understanding of cultural differences in a meaningful context (learning from differences and multiperspectivity)?
	Is the curriculum flexible enough so that schools can adapt it to take into account both local needs and conditions, and cultural specifics?
	Can the curriculum be extended to include alternative and private provision (without affecting the core curriculum and overall cohesion of education delivery)?
	Do we teach the social skills and competences necessary for democracy learning (such as the ability to take part in a public debate or resolve conflicts)?
	Does the curriculum provide opportunities for multicultural delivery, intercultural communication and exposure to other countries?
	Do we measure academic achievement in citizenship-related subjects (civics, history, social studies and political sciences)?
	Do we value intercultural encounters and experimental learning situations occasioned by non-formal education (such as exchanges, visits, projects)?
	Does the curriculum include specialised modules and training programmes as well as cross-cultural topics with "European" content?
	Do we develop tools to encourage students to use independent critical skills including critical reflection on their own responses to and attitudes towards other cultures?
	Are school and family-based exchanges included in the curriculum?
At teacher education level	Do we raise trainees' sensitivity to and awareness of intercultural issues?
	Do we encourage trainees to empathise with others?
	Do we improve trainees' effectiveness and fairness when dealing with intercultural encounters?
	Do we support trainees' productiveness and constructiveness?
	Do we encourage trainees to move from individual practice to action that shapes societal practice?
	Do we organise training sessions which focus on diversity, social sensitivity, cultural responsiveness and quality requirements as part of staff development schemes?

Do we provide professional training for teachers to address both proactive goals (such as how to build a learning community) as well as responsive needs (for example conflict resolution)?

Do we foster intercultural competence, in both initial and in-service training?

Do we prepare teachers to develop teaching materials which enhance culturally responsive education?

Do we equip teachers across different subject areas with methods and resources supporting deliberative learning, critical understanding, team work, conflict management and multiperspectivity (especially in teaching controversial and sensitive issues)?

Do we train teachers to guarantee safe learning conditions?

Do we provide trainees with educational strategies and working methods which help them to manage situations caused by discrimination, racism, xenophobia, sexism and marginalisation?

Do we train teachers to resolve conflicts peacefully?

Do we encourage trainees to deal with difficult situations that might arise in informal and interpersonal encounters (such as verbal threats or sexual intimidation)?

Do we promote reflective teachers and the self-development of practitioners, as a condition of quality assurance in education?

Do we guarantee school-based teacher training in order to address issues of importance for the local community such as cultural specifics, community development or any other particular training needs?

Do we develop the skills needed to update the professional competence required by diverse learning groups?

Do we provide teachers with new media skills in order to promote student participation in online collaborative learning and collective knowledge building?

Do we prepare teachers to gradually apply and evaluate non-cognitive, values-related and citizenship education goals?

Do we train teachers to assess students' previous cultural and social experiences and specific learning needs (for example their language and civic competencies, social distance)?

Do we prepare quality-assurance instruments inspired by education for democratic citizenship and taking account of the intercultural dimension?

Do we train teachers to motivate learners to work with others to make changes to themselves and their environment?

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This work is based on the analysis of the following documents:

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Chapter Two
Exchanges, partnerships and recognition

Intercultural education and pupil exchanges

Roberto Ruffino

> The Council of Europe should build on its work on youth participation and mobility… The possibility of launching a major programme for secondary school-based educational and intercultural exchanges should be pursued both within Europe and with neighbouring countries.
>
> *Wrocław Declaration on 50 years of European Cultural Co-operation* – 10 December 2004

> Globalisation has reached a point of no return. Now we all depend on one another and the only choice we have is to share both our vulnerability and our safety. We either swim together or drown together… In this sense globalisation may become a blessing: humankind never had such a chance before… We must learn to raise our identity to the level of our planet, to the level of humankind.
>
> Zygmunt Bauman (2004), *Identity. Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

1. The time is ripe for intercultural education through pupil exchanges

At the June 2006 meeting of the G8 in Moscow the ministers of education of the countries represented there signed a document that contains the following points:

> §8. The Ministers recognized that the internationalization of education is a reality. They agreed to promote innovative cross-border education delivery with the aim of increasing the international understanding, transparency and portability of qualifications and intensifying cooperation on quality assurance and accreditation.
>
> §9. The Ministers emphasized the importance of international educational mobility, whether through formal exchanges or voluntary mobility. Ministers encouraged wider exchanges and interactions at all levels of education and training.

This is just one of the recent and many statements by governments, international organisations, educators, politicians and business leaders, focusing on the importance of "globalising" education through the mobility of students and teachers, for the sake of improving international understanding and better communication in the world. These calls come as a reaction to several phenomena of our time: technology has shrunk the world in terms of travel and communication, economic and political activities have expanded to encompass the whole globe and there is the fear that a "clash of civilisations" may counteract these processes and erect new walls between ethnic and religious groups.

In Europe the need for greater intercultural understanding is especially urgent, as the process of the political unification of the continent involves more and more

countries following the end of the East-West political division in 1989. Nations with different languages, religions and traditions have been brought to live under the roof of common legislation, in a new era of participation and democracy, without sharing the same language and culture and without even understanding – sometimes – the role that cultural differences play in everyday life and communication.

At the closing conference of the 50th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention,[5] the ministers of the member states of the Council of Europe stated:

> We are committed in particular to promoting a model of democratic culture, underpinning the law and institutions and actively involving civil society and citizens, and to ensuring that diversity is a source of mutual enrichment, by promoting political, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue…

The Faro document ("Intercultural dialogue: the way ahead") calls for intercultural dialogue and education in many paragraphs including the following examples: "to strengthen co-operation between the competent international and regional organisations and with civil society – particularly young people"; "enhancing all opportunities for the training of educators in the fields of education for democratic citizenship, human rights, history, intercultural education"; "initiating a process to develop intercultural dialogue…".

Numerous initiatives in Europe have attempted to promote intercultural understanding through education and educational exchanges, especially under the "Socrates" and "Leonardo" programmes of the European Union. In recent years the Mobility Action Plan endorsed by the 2000 Nice Council and the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 10 July 2001 gave the impetus for a series of measures to be taken by the member states and the Commission. The "Work programme on the objectives of education and training systems in Europe" ("Education and Training 2010") approved by the 2002 Barcelona European Council included increasing European mobility and exchanges for education and training purposes as an objective. The recently adopted European Quality Charter for Mobility[6] outlines a number of principles for the implementation of exchange programmes for young people that are important for this study and for the future activities of the Council of Europe, even though some of them may apply less to students' mobility than to the mobility of other groups (young workers, etc.).

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5. Council of Europe (2005), 50th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention (Faro, 27-28 October 2005) closing conference: Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe strategy for developing intercultural dialogue (CM(2005)164).
6. Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: European Quality Charter for Mobility (2006).

An "Erasmus Junior" programme for secondary school pupils was launched in 2007-2013 under the heading of the new EU "Lifelong Learning Programme" (Comenius sub-programme): a tender for a preliminary study on individual pupils' mobility has been published.

Other steps have been taken to improve communication and intercultural exchanges between Europe and its neighbours in the Mediterranean region, such as the creation of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for dialogue between cultures, based in Alexandria, Egypt. The foundation brings together 35 national networks established by the Euro-Mediterranean partners. Bringing people and organisations from both shores of the Mediterranean closer together is the foundation's main objective and particular importance is attached to the development of human potential, youth being the main target group. Another priority is the promotion of tolerance among people by furthering exchanges between members of diverse societies.

The need for intercultural education to be achieved through student and pupil mobility is equally felt on a global scale, as world affairs do not revolve around the North-Atlantic region alone, but also include key players in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. The following is a statement from the document "50 years of the European Cultural Convention", pp.26-27:

> In this age of globalisation, this dialogue cannot be limited to the "old world". Europe must open up to the rest of the world, without shirking its historical responsibilities and its present economic role, but without complacency in the face of so many human rights violations. Here again it is essential that young people should have meeting places, places where they can put their heads together, for it is they who are building their lives in this age of globalisation….The universal is the local without the walls, Torga wrote. Young people must have the means to explore this field.

Jacques Delors' report to UNESCO[7] (1997) made a powerful plea to view education in a broader context and called for changes to education systems so that they can respond to the tensions that exist in today's world. The globalisation of culture is one of these tensions and new ways must be found to teach reciprocal understanding, responsibility towards humankind, solidarity and an ability to live with and to accept spiritual and cultural differences.

Indeed, it is not by chance that the year 2008 was declared the "Year of Intercultural Dialogue" with the full support of the Council of Europe[8] "We (the Ministers) support the European Commission's proposal to declare 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue".

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7. Delors J. (ed.) (1997), *Learning: the treasure within*, report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the twenty-first Century, UNESCO Publishing, Paris.
8. See the Faro Declaration above.

2. The Council of Europe paves the way

The first European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities was promoted by the Council of Europe and signed in 1953, one year before the signature of the European Cultural Convention. With the inauguration of the first European Youth Centre in Strasbourg in 1972, the topic of youth mobility drew greater attention. Three years earlier, the in-service training programme for educational staff had created an opportunity to share good practice among teachers from the member states, including in the area of pupil exchanges.

Within this framework, the Council of Europe pioneered the concept and the practice of intercultural education in Europe. In the late 1970s and early 1980s a number of seminars, colloquia, training courses and publications addressed the intercultural training of teachers and pointed to good practice to be used in the classrooms. It is worth remembering the valuable dossiers with socio-cultural information for teachers in countries hosting the children of migrant workers and those on the socio-cultural situation of migrants and their families (1978-1981), many of which originated from the seminars held at the Akademie of Donaueschingen, thanks to a grant from the German Government. A concluding symposium on the intercultural training of teachers was held in L'Aquila (Italy) on 10 to 14 May 1982, and a compendium[9] was published in August 1983.

In those same years the topic of intercultural education, that up until then had mainly been the concern of educators involved with children of migrant workers, began to also be considered in the framework of educational exchanges, through a series of colloquia sponsored by the European Youth Centre and the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL): "Youth mobility and education" (1978), "Cultural literacy and intercultural communication" (1981), "Common values for humankind" (1985). Later, throughout the 1990s, a Network for School Links and Exchanges explored the content issues related to educational exchanges. They ran a number of pilot projects and produced several interesting guidelines linking exchanges with intercultural education.

One of these projects (sponsored by the Council of Europe) was Eurovision (1994-1998). The Eurovision project involved pupils from six European countries (Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France and Ireland), and two non-European countries (Canada and Tunisia) and developed a series of intercultural learning

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9. Council of Europe, Council for Cultural Co-operation (2003), *Education of migrants' children: compendium of information on intercultural education schemes in Europe* (DECS/EGT(83)62), Strasbourg.

exercises around the idea of Europe. Another project was made possible by a grant from the Norwegian Government that enabled the Council of Europe to sponsor a pilot exchange programme involving secondary school students from eastern and western European countries. The ESSSE project (European Secondary School Student Exchange) lasted five years (1997-2001) and is described as an example of good practice in the European Quality Charter for Mobility quoted above.

Intercultural education was also addressed in the framework of the European campaign against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance. An "education pack" was published in 1995 ("All different – all equal: a resource file for intercultural education with adults and young people in informal education activities").

Initiatives such as the project on the "European dimension in history teaching", the annual European Day of Languages, the project on "Education for Roma/ Gypsy children" or that on "Education for democratic citizenship and human rights" were not only inter-disciplinary, but also intercultural in their approaches.

Over the years the perception that intercultural education may contribute to building a stable and cohesive society in Europe has gained ground – as institutions have seen the risk of merging nationalities and cultures that had never lived peacefully together but had been educated to see their neighbours as foes.

In fact, in recent years the concept of intercultural education has been more and more often intertwined with education for European and global citizenship, as was the case in the Faro Declaration (2005), quoted above ("enhancing all opportunities for the training of educators in the fields of education for democratic citizenship, human rights, history, intercultural education").

The declaration of the European ministers of education (Athens, 10-12 November 2003) recognised the "role of intercultural education and the major contribution of the Council of Europe in maintaining and developing the unity and diversity of our European societies" and urged the Council of Europe "to focus its work programme on enhancing the quality of education as a response to the challenges posed by the diversity of our societies by making democracy learning and intercultural education key components of educational reforms".

The declaration went into great detail recommending "conceptual research in intercultural education", "understanding of the European dimension of education in the context of globalisation", in order to develop "learning methods and teaching aids…to take the international dimension of curricula into account", to "disseminate examples of good practice", and to "encourage the member states to introduce the intercultural dimension in their education policies".

The Wrocław Declaration on 50 years of cultural co-operation in Europe[10] pointed to the need to promote cultural diversity and build shared values in Europe. It is necessary to define a common European identity in order to build a common European future and create cohesion in society through the recognition of different cultural traditions:

> We should build intercultural dialogue, including its inter-religious dimension, into European policy in full respect of the principles on which our societies are founded.

This programme was intended to be developed in co-operation with the European Union and UNESCO. A paragraph on "mobility" specifically calls for a "major programme for secondary school-based educational and intercultural exchanges within Europe and with neighbouring countries".

3. Past and current practices for pupils educational exchanges in Europe

3.1. A brief overview of pupil exchanges since the Second World War

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate how the international mobility of pupils may help participants to become "culturally literate", able (in other words) to appreciate cultural differences and to look at their own culture in the context of the others. It also suggests ways to promote and support this type of mobility.

This article only deals with projects and programmes which involve school attendance. Most international activities involving school pupils in the past five decades have been out-of-school activities, usually taking place during the summer holidays. Language courses, sport events, work camps, voluntary jobs and tourist visits have involved millions of young Europeans either in structured or unstructured form. Although they also may have led to fruitful intercultural experiences, this study does not specifically deal with them.

At the end of the Second World War international exchanges were for university students only – and took place in very limited numbers. In addition to students who travelled by their own means, a few governments provided scholarships to foreign students coming to their countries to attend higher education courses, mainly with the aim of enhancing their national image and spreading knowledge

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10. Council of Europe (2004), *Wrocław Declaration on 50 years of European Cultural Co-operation,* adopted at the opening conference for the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention, Wrocław, 9-10 December 2004 (CM(2004)223 Addendum 1).

of their national language. Since then bilateral cultural agreements between states and national cultural institutes abroad have evolved and have also favoured intercultural activities, although the focus of this work has remained on "selling" states' national culture abroad.

Three events are worth mentioning in this context at governmental level. In 1948 the United Kingdom established the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges and in 1963 the French and German governments opened the Franco-German Youth Office. In 1983 the G7 Williamsburg Summit launched a youth exchange programme that involved France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada and the United States of America. In various ways these initiatives have had an impact on educational exchanges even in countries that were not directly involved.

A few regional governments also took the lead in promoting educational exchanges and became active partners in bi- and multi-lateral projects, especially in Germany and in Italy. The twinning of cities and regions encouraged this type of activity – although much more for out-of-school projects than in school-based mobility.

Intergovernmental organisations have naturally been more active in this sector. UNESCO offered an ideal neutral platform where institutions and NGOs could meet and discuss international education issues. The "travel and grants scheme for youth and student leaders" was created in 1951. The Associated School Project was launched by UNESCO in 1953 to promote programmes for international understanding and facilitate exchanges of teachers, pupils and educational materials across the borders. For several decades the yearbook "Study Abroad" was the only source of reliable information for students wanting to study in countries other than their own. As early as the 1970s, various research projects were funded in the intercultural communication field. The largest world meeting on educational youth exchange for representatives of governments and NGOs was organised by UNESCO in Rome in 1987.

The work of the Council of Europe has been equally relevant as has been illustrated in the previous section.

The European Union has also played a major role in the promotion and support of youth mobility in Europe, starting with an exchange of young farmers in 1964 and of young workers in 1977. Later it developed large exchanges of university students (Erasmus 1985), young professionals and trainees, and of teachers and educators, which became the programmes we know today: "Leonardo",

"Socrates" and "Grundtvig". The EU also started a "Lifelong Learning Programme" in 2007. The EU contribution has not been just in terms of funds and structures, but also in terms of ideas, norms and materials that have influenced national legislation and educational institutions in the member states, further afield in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

Age-wise, these EU programmes have involved young people aged between 15 and 29. Many of them have been secondary school pupils between the ages of 15 and 18, and today an increasing number of projects target middle school and even elementary school pupils.

As a consequence, since the 1980s schools have embraced mobility more and more – also with the support of some funding from European, regional or local authorities. Learning and practising a foreign language was the initial motivation for these projects, which were mainly for groups or classes. For practical, organisational and financial reasons school exchanges have tended to be organised for groups – although a group tends to shelter the individual participants from face-to-face confrontation with difference and limits the depth of the intercultural encounter.

Individual pupil exchanges were invented and promoted by the (few) NGOs that chose to operate in the field of educational exchanges: AFS Intercultural Programs, EFIL (European Federation for Intercultural Learning), Experiment in International Living, Youth for Understanding, Rotary International and – for a limited period of time – International Christian Youth Exchange. From the early 1980s, also as a consequence of the Williamsburg Summit of 1983, which allocated significant funds in the United States, numerous commercial organisations have entered the field of pupil exchanges, especially between Europe, the United States and other English speaking countries.

The increase in wealth and of travel possibilities has also multiplied the numbers of pupils who study abroad outside any government or structured scheme, relying on family friends and acquaintances for hospitality. It is not unrealistic to imagine that in Europe the number of these "autonomous pupils" may well equal the number of those who go through government programmes or specialised agencies.

Another development is a change in young people's motivation for spending a period of time studying abroad, that has occurred since the post-war period. The desire to learn a language of international value was the main reason the United Kingdom, France and Germany became key destinations and key players in the mobility scene in Europe. It is significant that the two most important institutions

promoting educational exchanges in Europe were created in these countries (the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges in 1948 and the Franco-German Youth Office in 1963).

Intercultural education began to emerge as a leading theme for educational exchanges only in the 1970s[11] and later it became a leitmotiv of any international activity involving youth and education in Europe. It is doubtful whether many of these activities really lead to "a process that stimulates doubts about oneself, curiosity for others and understanding of the interaction between the two" as intercultural learning was defined in the European Conference on Intolerance in 1980, but there is a growing awareness that a period of study in another country is not just an opportunity to learn and practise a foreign language.

3.2. A look at three areas of good practice in Europe

Among the many experiences in Europe over the past 60 years, which cannot all be described in the limited scope of this contribution, it is worth looking at some valuable examples of good practice in international school-based exchanges. These illustrate how intercultural projects have been planned, organised, regulated, supported and funded with the aim of helping those planning future activities. This section therefore examines examples of good practice in the fields of:

– projects;

– norms set by member states;

– norms set by European institutions.

Good practice: projects

The ESSSE project

This report has already mentioned the Council of Europe's ESSSE project. This project was described as a model and an "example of good practice" in the European Quality Charter for Mobility in education and training (2006):

> The European Secondary Schools Student Exchange (ESSSE) project is an initiative of the Council of Europe, which involves young people in the age bracket 16-19 from the European countries that are members of the Council of Europe. These young people spend three months in another European country (typically the exchanges happen between Eastern European and Western European countries), during which time they attend school in the

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11. The first major colloquium on this theme was held at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg in 1978 ("Youth mobility and education") on the initiative of EFIL.

host country and live with a family there. The aim of the programme is to promote peace and democracy in Europe through intercultural learning. Operational responsibility for the programme has been delegated to the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL), which is an umbrella organisation for the AFS organisations in Europe. The exchanges are carried out by the member organisations of EFIL, which are voluntary, non-profit NGOs active in the field of youth exchange. In total, 23 European countries participate in the scheme, and in the years 1998-2002, 333 students went abroad with this programme.

To ensure the quality of the learning experience, a set of quality criteria has been formulated; an important part of which concerns logistical support. The term "logistical support" covers a number of issues. The sending organisations will provide detailed information regarding travel, the obtaining of the appropriate visas and permits in the host country, and other official documentation regarding social security, insurance etc. Under this heading also falls negotiating with schools to allow the recognition of the study period abroad, and negotiating enrolment procedures for students to be hosted. In addition, all organisations in the AFS system have developed individual safety handbooks that cover essential information for the student to warrant a safe sojourn: what to do when one gets lost, traffic laws, rules for hitch-hiking etc. as well as giving emergency numbers that can be used in the event of accident, illness, theft etc. The obligations for sending and hosting organisations in terms of logistical support have been written up in a quality charter that gives participants, parents and participating organisations and institutions a clear impression what they can expect.

The committee of experts that reviewed the ESSSE programme results in September 2000 was unanimously convinced that the ESSSE experience was a valuable educational laboratory – for which the Council of Europe must be given credit – and that it would be a mistake to let it stop after the year 2001. It was a learning tool for the education community of Europe that enables to test European integration in the reality of a classroom and the actual difficulties that arise when one passes from the declarations of intent to the actual moving of pupils from one school system to another.

The committee stressed the word "laboratory" since the insights and conclusions to be drawn from this project were far greater than the number of participants, as the programme challenged the traditional "consumer approach" to education ("I want to learn English, because it is good for my career") and favoured a more participatory and humanistic approach.

ESSSE also provided an outstanding (and unique) example of language learning beyond the traditional "international languages" of Europe. Students travelled, for example, to Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia and in three months they became so proficient in their host country's language, that they could follow lessons in the classroom. The preparatory committee of the European Year of Languages (EYL) (2001) presented this exchange programme at the launch of the EYL conference on 18 to 20 February 2001 in Sweden, and the "language portfolio" was also tested with the ESSSE participants.

The evaluation of the ESSSE project shows how much work needs to be done in European schools in order to go beyond a pure "classroom approach" to teaching

and curricula, towards a more individualised approach to learning. The students' reports from ESSSE are excellent indicators of the problems that exist and of the directions that should be taken.

The "Network on School Links and Exchanges"

Another Council of Europe project was sponsored within the "Network on School Links and Exchanges". It was called Eurovision (1994-1998) and it involved pupils from six European countries (Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France and Ireland), and two non-European countries (Canada and Tunisia). It was based on a series of intercultural learning experiences based around the idea of Europe and the perception of Europe held by those who live within its boundaries versus the perception held by those who come from other regions of the world. The core of the project was a "collage" of the pupil's views. The participating pupils prepared these at home and compared them with those prepared by pupils from other schools during a meeting in Strasbourg.

After several days of working together and of intercultural training, eight new groups were formed made up of one pupil from each country and a new "vision of Europe" collage was put together by each group. The debriefing was long and pointed at the differences between a national and an intercultural view of the same reality.

The project was an interesting tool to link intercultural practice with issues of political organisation, citizenship, historical outlook, religious background and teacher training. The initial exercise for the eight teacher-leaders from the different countries on their assessment of the ten most important historical events of the second millennium was a real eye opener.

The project was so motivating that several follow-up sessions were organised by the schools themselves in France, Estonia and Cyprus.

The "year abroad programme"

The largest existing experiment in individual pupils' mobility in Europe is the "year abroad programme" run by the 23 national organisations that are members of the European Federation for Intercultural Learning.

The EFIL is the umbrella organisation of the European AFS organisations in Europe. AFS is a non-profit volunteer-based educational organisation offering exchanges for students, young adults and teachers in over 50 countries around the world, working in a network covering 56 countries. Members of EFIL are voluntary,

non-governmental, non-profit organisations providing intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world. It particularly supports its members in establishing programmes that bridge the gap between the training provided by most educational systems and the intercultural skills and global perspectives needed to foster harmony in the world. Furthermore, EFIL co-ordinates several exchange activities on behalf of its members or in conjunction with international organisations.

The "year abroad programme" started in 1974 with eight secondary school pupils spending one year in another European country, at the age of 17. It has since expanded into an activity involving almost 1 000 pupils a year. It is worth noticing that the traditional European exchange countries (France, Germany and United Kingdom) do not play a major role in this exchange, which is not determined by linguistic interests. Once pupils are selected and prepared by the EFIL member organisations, they travel (for instance) from their home country to Portugal and Turkey, Latvia and Hungary, Italy and Iceland and in the course of their year abroad – where they are hosted by selected families and assisted by (trained) volunteer mentors – they manage to learn the foreign language fluently and to integrate into everyday school life in their host country.

Similar programmes are also run by a few other organisations. The next largest one is managed by "Youth for Understanding"[12] which organised exchanges involving 495 pupils within Europe in 2005-2006.

Good practice: norms set by member states

A traditional obstacle to the growth of pupil exchanges is the lack of recognition of studies abroad by the school authorities of the country of origin and the lack of clear norms for the enrolment of foreign pupils in schools for a limited period of time. Some member states of the Council of Europe have taken positive action in this field and deserve to be mentioned.

Austria was the first European country to adopt a decree on the accreditation of limited periods of study abroad undertaken by school pupils. Regulations have also been adopted concerning the status of foreign pupils and the certification of periods of study in Austrian schools (Schulunterrichtsgesetz of 1986 as amended on 1 October 1998 to specify that the period should be "of minimum 5 months and maximum 1 year").

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12. Youth For Understanding (YFU) is a non-profit educational organisation which offers opportunities for young people around the world to spend a summer, semester or year with a host family in another culture.

In June 2006 the ministers of culture of the German *Länder* adopted a resolution to simplify the recognition of a school year abroad. The resolution reduces the number of existing regulations and guarantees the compatibility of school certificates within Germany and, by consequence, also between Germany and other countries. The *Länder* must apply this new regulation by 2011 at the latest.

In Italy, the circular letter of the Ministry of Education No. 181 of 17 March 1997 invites schools to encourage individual pupil exchanges and admits foreign school reports as valid for the readmission of pupils into the Italian school system. It is the responsibility of the sending school to contact the hosting school abroad and to acquire all useful information on the curriculum and performance of the Italian pupil.

In Norway the government encourages pupils to spend a school year abroad and supports this activity with funds (see below).

The Government of Ireland does not encourage absences from the national school system to attend courses abroad, but it has set aside a special year (transition year) when pupils are encouraged to develop personal interests and projects, which may include intercultural school experiences in other countries.

In other countries the readmission of pupils after studies abroad or the enrolment of foreign pupils is not the concern of central government, but is handled on an ad hoc basis by each school, with considerable variation within individual countries and regions.

Good practice: norms set by the European Union and the Council of Europe

The EU Quality Charter for Mobility, which was first proposed in 2004, sums up 30 years of experience and evaluation in the field of youth exchanges involving, among others, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, schools and NGOs. It outlines a number of principles for the implementation of exchange programmes for young people that are also important for this study and for the future activities of the Council of Europe, although some of them may apply less to pupils' mobility than to projects for other groups (for example, young workers). The document that introduced the proposal of a charter in 2004 stated that:

> The benefits derived from a mobility period are very much dependent on the quality of the practical arrangements: preparation, learning environment, monitoring, support, recognition. Educational mobility should be a useful learning experience. Both the individual and the organisations involved can greatly enhance its value by proper planning, implementation and evaluation.

The principles that should be observed by a quality exchange programme, were outlined as follows:

– Training/study plan. For every stay abroad undertaken for a learning purpose a learning plan should be elaborated beforehand and agreed by all parties: the sending institution, the hosting organisation and the participant. This agreement should enumerate the learning aims and expected outcomes and indicate how these will be reached.

– Enhancement of the participant's line of study or occupation. The learning experience abroad should be designed in such a way that it becomes an integral part of the participants' educational pathway, both in terms of matching with his/her previous education and of recognising its results for the future.

– Recognition and transparency. If a study or placement period abroad takes place as an integral part of a formal study or training programme, the stay should be recognised as a part of this on the basis of a set of transparent criteria that have been agreed beforehand. For other stays and in particular stays undertaken in the context of non-formal or informal education and training, a certificate should be issued so that the participant is able to record his or her participation or learning outcomes in a satisfactory and credible way.

– Preparation. Preparation should, in principle, encompass linguistic, cultural, practical, pedagogical and personal aspects, including in certain cases (e.g. for disadvantaged groups) motivation.

– Linguistic preparation and assistance. Participants should be given the opportunity to become acquainted with, or to increase their knowledge, of the language of the host country. Where appropriate, this should include language assessment and language learning prior to departure as well as linguistic support in the host country.

– Role of the mentor. A mentor should be appointed at the hosting organisation (educational establishment, enterprise, etc.) whose task it is to ensure the proper integration of the participant into the host environment and to act as a contact and support person in the event of difficulties.

– Adequate logistical assistance. Adequate logistical assistance in the shape of information and practical assistance with travel arrangements, insurance, residence and/or working permits, social security, accommodation, etc., should be provided.

– Debriefing and evaluation. Upon return to the home country, participants should have access to guidance to capitalise on competences and skills acquired during

the stay. The stay should be properly evaluated and it should be ascertained whether the aims of the training/study agreement have been met.

– Assistance with reintegration. Participants in long-term mobility activities should receive adequate assistance with reintegration into the social, educational or professional environment of the home country.

– Clear definition of commitments and responsibilities. The responsibilities arising from the above quality criteria should be clearly defined and communicated to all involved parties – including participants – in order to ensure a correct and smooth implementation of the project. The allocation of responsibilities should be indicated in written documents, possibly contracts, signed by the concerned parties.

The Committee on Education and Culture of the European Parliament approved these guidelines in 2006[13] as follows:

– Guidance and information: Potential candidates for mobility should have access, at national or regional level, to reliable sources of guidance and information on equal opportunities for all for mobility and the conditions in which it can be taken up. Among other things, clear information should be provided on the entire set of guidelines of the mobility charter about the role and tasks of the sending and hosting organisations and about the various education and training systems.

– Learning plan: Before undertaking any kind of mobility for education or training purposes, a learning plan, with special emphasis on linguistic preparation, should be drawn up and agreed by everyone involved, including the sending and hosting organisations and the participants. The plan should outline the objectives and expected outcomes, as well as how these would be achieved and implemented. When drawing up the learning plan, the issues of reintegration into the home country and evaluation should be borne in mind.

– Personalisation: Mobility undertaken for education or training purposes should fit in as much as possible with the personal learning pathways, skills and motivation of the participants, and be designed to develop or supplement them.

– General preparation: Prior preparation of the participants is essential, and should be tailored to their specific needs. It should include linguistic, pedagogical, practical, administrative, legal, personal, cultural and financial aspects, as necessary.

– Linguistic aspects: Language skills are important for effective learning, intercultural communication and a better understanding of the host country culture.

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13. European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education, 4 May 2006.

Participants, and their sending and host institutions, should pay special attention to appropriate linguistic preparation. Mobility arrangements should include:

- before departure, language assessment and the opportunity to follow courses in the language of the host country and/or in the language of instruction, if different;
- in the host country, linguistic support and advice.

– Logistical support: Adequate logistical support should be provided to the participants. This could include information and assistance with travel arrangements, insurance, residence or work permits, social security, accommodation, and any other practical aspects, including safety issues relevant to their stay.

– Mentoring: The hosting organisation (educational establishment, youth organisation, company, etc.) should provide a mentor who will be responsible for helping the participants with their effective integration into the host environment and will act as a contact person for obtaining further assistance.

– Recognition: If a study or placement period abroad is an integral part of a formal study or training programme, this fact should be stated in the learning plan, and participants should be provided with assistance to facilitate recognition and certification. In the learning plan the sending organisation should undertake to recognise any successful period of mobility. For other types of mobility, and particularly those in the context of non-formal education and training, a certificate should be issued so that the participant is able to demonstrate his or her active participation and learning outcomes in a satisfactory and credible way. In this context the use of "Europass" should be encouraged.

– Reintegration and evaluation: On return to their home country, participants should be given guidance on how to make use of competences and skills acquired during the stay. Appropriate help with reintegration into the social, educational or professional environment of the home country should be available to people returning after long-term mobility. The experience gained should be properly evaluated by participants, together with the organisations responsible, to assess whether the aims of the learning plan have been met.

– Commitments and responsibilities: The responsibilities arising from these quality criteria should be agreed by the sending and hosting organisations and the participants. They should be confirmed in writing, so that responsibilities are clear to all concerned.

The Europass Mobility document (mentioned above) is an important tool for the recognition of studies abroad. It is a record of any organised period of time that a person spends in another European country for the purpose of learning or training. This includes for example:

– a work placement in a company;

– an academic term as part of an exchange programme;

– a voluntary placement in an NGO.

The mobility experience is monitored by two partner organisations, the first in the country of origin and the second in the host country. Both partners agree on the purpose, content and duration of the experience, and a mentor is identified in the host country. The partners may be universities, schools, training centres, companies, NGOs and so on.

The Europass Mobility is intended for any person undergoing a mobility experience in a European country, whatever their age or level of education. It is completed by the home and host organisations involved in the mobility project in a language agreed between both organisations and the person concerned.

Another useful tool for the recognition of studies abroad is the European Language Portfolio (ELP), devised by the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Division and piloted in 15 Council of Europe member states between 1998 and 2000. It was launched throughout Europe during 2001, the European Year of Languages.

The ELP has three obligatory components:

– a language passport, which summarises the owner's linguistic identity, language learning achievement and intercultural experience, and includes the owner's assessment of his/her own language competence according to the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages;

– a language biography, which is used to set intermediate learning goals, review progress, and record significant language learning and intercultural experiences;

– a dossier, in which the owner collects samples of his/her work and evidence of his/her achievements in second/foreign language learning.

The Council of Europe has established a European Validation Committee, which meets twice a year to accredit ELP models submitted by competent authorities in member states and by international non-governmental organisations. In order to be accredited, ELP models must comply with the principles and guidelines approved by the Council of Europe. The ELP is designed:

– to encourage the lifelong learning of languages, to any level of proficiency;

– to make the learning process more transparent and to develop the learner's ability to assess his/her own competence;

– to facilitate mobility within Europe by providing a clear profile of the owner's language skills;

– to contribute to mutual understanding within Europe by promoting plurilingualism (the ability to communicate in two or more languages) and intercultural learning.

4.   Guidelines for setting up intercultural pupil exchanges

4.1. Introduction

Like any other form of learning intercultural learning involves the cognitive dimension "learning to know", the affective dimension "learning to be" and the pragmatic dimension "learning to do", to which we may add a fourth dimension: the global dimension or "learning to live together".

Intercultural competence is made up of key features such as empathy, role distance, the tolerance of ambiguity, awareness of self, emotional openness as well as multiperspectivity, just to name a few.

In this respect educational exchanges among pupils of different countries/cultures are a pedagogical tool of unsurpassed value for developing these competences, and stimulating the knowledge, self-awareness and skills needed to live in a multicultural society. The learning process that occurs within an individual pupil on an intercultural exchange can lead to a deep cultural assessment of themselves in the context of others. Any "otherness" becomes an identity mirror that generates a reflection on personal beliefs and behaviours and it stimulates an individual to become more aware of his/her own cultural boundaries (which he/she is often not aware of).

This is an intellectual as well as an emotional experience, and it accelerates when an individual is fully immersed in a different way of living, as happens when living in another country. Abroad, emotions play an important role and individuals often feel uneasy as they realise that their sets of values and behaviour do not help them in the new situation. Their culture is not adapted to the new context. When this happens, it is normal to look at oneself, to analyse and assess the new situation and to try to regain a sense of comfort. In doing so one compares old and new approaches and acquires a greater awareness of one's own worldview and its relativity.

One does not learn how to swim by reading a manual. In the same way one cannot appreciate one's own culture without having seen it from the outside and experienced its relativity. The removal of people from their familiar environment and their placement in a new environment puts them at the core of an inter-cultural experience. They find themselves in a "minority" or "marginal situation" (minority or marginal in comparison with the culture of the host country), in a situation where emotions and intelligence are equally challenged, as they try to behave in an acceptable fashion in the new environment.

Although many schools refrain from this radical approach and look at intercultural education as a new subject to be included in the curriculum, an extended intercultural experience in another country is likely to lead to a new vision of the world, a new way of being: what the ancient Greeks called a "metanoia" – a conversion of the mind.

In addition, the learning opportunities presented by an intercultural experience do not only result in a greater awareness of one's own culture, the cultures of others and the links that may exist between the two. Intercultural exchanges also encourage learners to develop broader loyalties beyond their home and nation and to acquire a sense of belonging to larger communities, such as Europe or the world.

This broadening of horizons must be an objective of all intercultural exchange projects. The projects should also always include elements of civil and political education. In a wider perspective, the development of an intercultural mindset can be the first chapter of a new syllabus that deals with human rights educa-tion, development education, peace education or ecological education, with the purpose of creating European and global citizens who are conscious of their roots, but have moved away from a narrow local or national view of the world.

4.2. Learning what?

The skills that pupils may acquire through an intercultural experience can be grouped under four areas of growth and change:[14]

– personal values and skills;

– interpersonal relationship building;

– intercultural knowledge and sensitivity; and

– global issues awareness.

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14. See Grove, C. and Hansel, B. (1985), "Learning by doing: what a high school student can learn from a homestay abroad" in *Study abroad and foreign students* No. 107, pp. 26-31.

Personal values and skills

While abroad on an exchange programme, pupils must make judgements and embark on actions in the absence of familiar cultural clues. In such unusual circumstances, participants are confronted repeatedly with crises of varying dimensions. If participants are well prepared in advance and are assured of support and guidance, they are able to turn these crises into opportunities for reassessing their values, stretching their capacities, and practising new skills.

They gain awareness of previously hidden aspects of their personalities and may attain the following learning objectives:

– to think creatively;

– to think critically;

– to accept more responsibility for themselves;

– to de-emphasise the importance of material things;

– to be more fully aware of themselves.

Interpersonal relationship building

If a participant in an intercultural project becomes fully involved in the daily life and working arrangements of a variety of people in the new environment, he or she must develop and maintain relationships with others from diverse backgrounds. The interpersonal skills developed in this intercultural context are transferable to many other settings and include the ability:

– to deepen a concern for and a sensitivity to others;

– to increase an adaptability to changing social circumstances;

– to value human diversity;

– to enjoy oneself in the company of others.

Intercultural knowledge and sensitivity

During the course of their immersion in another culture, participants are obviously exposed to many dimensions of that culture. These dimensions range from the simple acquisition of the language and the necessities of daily life to the complex and subtle distinctions made by their hosts among alternative values, social norms and patterns of thought. The experience of being involved in so many dimensions of life has the effect of deepening participants' insights into

their home culture as well as their knowledge of their host culture. Most participants attain the following learning objectives:

– to communicate with others using their ways of expression;

– to increase knowledge of the host country and its culture;

– to increase sensitivity to subtle features of the host's culture;

– to understand the nature of cultural differences;

– to broaden one's skills and concepts in intercultural communication.

Global issues awareness

Living in another environment helps participants to recognise that the world is one large community, a global island, in which certain problems are shared by everyone everywhere. They become able to empathise with their hosts' perspective on some of these problems and to appreciate that workable solutions must be culturally sensitive and not merely technologically feasible. Such awareness prepares them to understand the crises facing humankind. Most people who take part in intercultural exchanges attain the following learning objectives:

– to deepen interest in and concern about world affairs;

– to be aware of worldwide linkages;

– to gain in commitment to the search for solutions to global problems.

In the course of many years of experience, codes of good practice have been developed by practitioners in the field of intercultural pupil exchanges and they are summarised in the European Union's document, the European Quality Charter for Mobility.[15]

4.3. Basic provisions: the European Quality Charter for Mobility

The European Quality Charter for Mobility was adopted by the European Parliament on 18 December 2006 and it constitutes a high-quality reference document for education and training stays abroad. It complements a 2001 recommendation on mobility for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers and has the same scope.

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15. Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: European Quality Charter for Mobility (2006/961/EC).

The charter is addressed to the member states, particularly their organisations responsible for stays abroad, and provides guidance on mobility arrangements for learning or other purposes, such as professional development. The charter addresses stays abroad for both young and adult participants.

The guidance consists of ten principles implemented on a voluntary and flexible basis, being adaptable to the nature of each stay. These principles are presented above, on pages 77-78.

The implementation of the charter implies the elimination by the member states of mobility obstacles and the provision of support and infrastructure to help raise education and training levels in the European Union. It also includes measures to promote mobility by providing easily accessible information. The European Commission must encourage the application of the charter in the member states: it shall continue to co-operate with the member states and social partners, particularly with regard to the exchange of information and experience relating to the implementation of measures, and to develop statistical data on mobility.

4.4. A learning plan for an individual pupil exchange

A key point of the charter is point number 2, which calls for a learning plan, that "must describe the objectives and expected outcomes [of an intercultural exchange], the means of achieving them, and evaluation, and must also take account of reintegration issues".

The issues to be considered when a school develops such a plan are outlined further on in the text under "An individual exchange step-by-step".

Here we want to recall a general principle that has already been stated: any learning plan for an intercultural experience abroad should start from the acknowledgement that intercultural learning does not mean just learning about other cultures, but rather learning about one's self in the context of other cultures. It is a process that impacts the identity of a pupil and generates a reflection on beliefs and behaviours, while stimulating an individual to become aware of his/her own cultural boundaries (which are often unconscious).

Therefore, in developing a learning plan for an intercultural exchange, schools should consider:

– a balance of intellectual and emotional components;
– an introduction to the study of values and behaviours;
– the perception of time in different cultures.

A balance of intellectual and emotional stimuli

An intercultural experience abroad is a life experience, which involves all aspects of human behaviour. The actors involved are always people – not cultures in an abstract sense – with all their personal traits and background variables: intelligence, passion, friendliness, boredom, nostalgia, fatigue and so on. Therefore ensuring the effectiveness of an intercultural exchange is a complex process that involves elements of cultural anthropology, psychology, education and communication science. Gender, age, social class, family background and the perception of one's self and of the world all heavily influence the way one approaches people of different cultures. The readiness to open up emotionally and intellectually and to "accept ambiguity" are essential to successful interaction.

Schools are used to dealing with the academic and intellectual aspects of learning, less with the emotional implications and even less with the out-of-school activities of their pupils. And yet a learning experience is more profound, when it impacts on the emotions of the learner. An international experience does not lead to a greater understanding of self and others, unless certain intellectual and emotional conditions are met: when educational goals are not set clearly and pupils are not adequately prepared and counselled during the experience, an exchange may even lead to the reinforcement of prejudice and the rejection of differences.

All this means that a learning plan for an individual exchange must be less concerned with the homogeneity of curricula between the sending and the hosting schools, and more with the human acceptance of the foreign pupil by his host family, schoolmates and teachers and with an adequate mentoring system during the stay abroad.

An introduction to the study of values and behaviours

An intercultural exchange should not be seen as an exchange between nation states. It should deal more with differences in beliefs, values and lifestyles that go beyond national stereotypes. Nation states should not be presented as culturally homogeneous entities and the multiplicity of cultures that today exist in most countries should be addressed adequately. Ethnic and religious factors, family structures and relationships, the concepts of time and space are just some of the variables that pupils will be confronted with when they are abroad.

The study of values and behaviours should be encouraged during the preparation phase of an exchange. During and after the exchange, in a debriefing phase, teachers should invite pupils to discuss topics such as: Do common values really

exist in the world? If they do exist, what are they? Which values may become the common denominators for humankind tomorrow? Is absolute loyalty to one's nation compatible with international co-operation? Is peace compatible with cultural diversity?

The perception of time in different cultures – free time and the length of a programme

Differences in the perception of time must be understood when planning an intercultural experience: the perception and use of time, especially of free time, differs from one culture to another. Experience shows that pupils on exchanges have more difficulties dealing with unstructured time, than with school or work activities.

Also the length of an exchange project must be considered. The effectiveness of an intercultural exchange cannot be measured in weeks and months, but the question is whether the project is long enough to lead participants through a "values crisis" and help them to overcome it. Only if a pupil lives through situations that force him/her to question "why he/she is what he/she is", while others are different, without being negative, does the transfer of a person from one country to another become also a lesson in intercultural education and the key preconditions are developed for intercultural understanding mentioned earlier in this paper.

4.5. An individual exchange step-by-step: the role of schools

An international mobility programme is a process that begins before and ends after the actual visit of a pupil to another country. This process involves several phases:

– the definition of clear programme objectives by the organisers in the hosting and sending countries, in consultation with each other;

– the definition of the institution (school or other) that is legally responsible for the project and for the welfare of the pupils, who are likely to be minors: a contract must be signed between the institution and the parents/guardians of the pupils;

– the preparation of a budget that allows the participation of pupils with limited financial resources: if the institution in charge (school or other) does not have a provision for subsidies or scholarships, resources may be sought from the education authorities of the local or regional government, or from private sponsors;

– a selection of participants in accordance with the objectives of the programme: such a selection cannot be based only on academic performance and it must

take into account the capacity of a pupil to live away from his/her family and friends and his/her ability to socialise easily with new people, of different ages, regardless of the socio-economic background of his/her family;

– a pre-departure orientation course that must clarify expectations, provide information on the other country, school and host family and give tools that enlarge the awareness of one's own culture and develop an ability to interact with different cultural environments;

– the identification of an "authentic" hosting situation abroad: "authentic" means a situation that is not artificially set up for the incoming visitors, but should be a normal living situation, preferably in a host family, where the culture of the host country is lived and experienced spontaneously in everyday life. Experience shows that often the matching done by the host school between incoming pupils and host families is not successful and pupils have to be moved to another family a few weeks or months after their arrival;

– an introductory course to the basics of the language of the host country along with the most common non-verbal elements of communication;

– the support of a mentor – either a teacher trained in managing intercultural situations or a person with such experience from outside the school – who can deal with the emotional needs of the visiting pupils and provide counselling when necessary. It should be noted that difficult situations do not usually occur during school hours, but within the host families or during free time, when young people organise activities for themselves in the evenings or at the weekends;

– a creative use of the presence of a foreign pupil in the classroom, with learning projects that involve the whole class and that make the foreign pupil feel welcome and allows them to contribute to the life of the classroom and of the school;

– an evaluation and follow-up that should facilitate the pupils' adaptation and integration back into their school. Most pupils who participate in an individual pupil exchange say that their schools do not appreciate what they have learned abroad and limit their evaluation to a comparison of curricula between the sending and hosting schools. Rather than checking only on academic accomplishments, schools could encourage their pupils to write and talk about the relevant aspects of their experience: a good practice is to have pupils write about their expectations before they go abroad and then compare these expectations with reality after they return home. Helping the pupils to verbalise their experience abroad, also in terms of the acquisition of intercultural skills,

and to describe their experience to their peers is an excellent way to clarify the learning process that has taken place and to stabilise its results.

Finally schools should remember that participants in a mobility project are not only the individuals who travel to another country, but also their natural and host families, their teachers and schoolmates. They are all exposed to the intercultural experience and should all be equally prepared for the challenges of the encounter. They should be involved in the preparation of the exchange and should learn from the exchange in same way as the pupils who actually travel.

The role of mentors for the success of an individual exchange should not be underestimated. Mentors should be specifically trained to monitor intercultural situations: the skills needed in an international context are different from those needed in a national environment. If a school wishes to limit its involvement in an intercultural project to the academic part of the exchange, it should be encouraged to use the services of an agency (preferably an NGO) that can select and orient the pupils, find the host families, provide counselling when needed and even assume the legal responsibility of the whole project.

4.6. Selecting an exchange organisation

Individual pupil mobility may be organised by governments or intergovernmental organisations, by schools, by NGOs, by foundations and associations. More recently even travel agencies and commercial organisations have entered this field for profit. Schools are often confronted with a vast offer of sojourns abroad for their pupils and it may be difficult to make a choice.

Only a few governments, up until now, have addressed the issue of assessing the quality of the work of the exchange organisations, in order to help schools make a choice. In some countries, consumer protection laws define minimum requirements for the quality of international youth programmes (for instance in the Federal Republic of Germany and in Sweden). Outside Europe, the Government of the United States of America has guidelines on rules and regulations to grant Exchange Visitor Status. Organisations that do not meet these requirements are not allowed to bring foreign youth into the country under their sponsorship. It would be advisable for all member states of the Council of Europe to have a list of exchange organisations that they recommend to their schools.

In any case schools should at least check the statutes, activities, membership and budget of the exchange organisations before they enter any co-operation

agreement. NGOs should be given preference, because of their not-for-profit nature, when their competence is widely recognised.

Listed below are some elements schools should investigate before entering an agreement with an exchange organisation:

– its history, non-profit nature and legal status;
– its educational project: does it co-operate with competent bodies, such as universities, other schools, cultural institutions?
– its international network: affiliations, awards, etc;
– the ratio between staff and programme participants;
– the involvement of volunteers: the way in which they are trained;
– its ability to provide accurate information on its programmes;
– its policy and methods for selecting participants;
– its experience in sending and hosting pupils;
– its ability to prepare and orient participants;
– the quality of its services (support, intercultural and interpersonal expertise, authentic hosting situations);
– its language teaching provisions;
– its support network: does it provide counselling services?
– how does it deal, if at all, with disabled participants or participants from disadvantaged backgrounds?
– its evaluation methodologies;
– its insurance plan;
– its financial resources.

4.7. How to define success in an individual exchange

Evaluation is a standard practice in any educational project, but evaluating an individual pupil exchange poses some difficulties. Teachers are used to measuring tangible achievements, such as the acquisition of a foreign language or of a skill; but there are no tools to define and measure the progress in tolerance and international understanding made by a pupil in the course of one year abroad.

Measuring changes in the intercultural competence of pupils who have returned from a stay abroad requires the identification of measurable competence

indicators. Some of these may belong to categories that are normally evaluated in schoolwork (as is the case with foreign language proficiency), while others may be further removed from traditional academic measurements. Mitch Hammer, in his recent study on the AFS programmes,[16] measured the following, in addition to foreign language proficiency:

> Intercultural anxiety – or the variations in the level of personal anxiety when a person meets another person from a different culture, rather than from his/her own;
>
> Cultural knowledge – or the knowledge of the habits, customs, norms and lifestyles of the foreign culture where a pupil was on an exchange;
>
> Interaction with people from other cultures – or the ability to communicate and act properly in an environment culturally different to one's own;
>
> Friendships with people from other cultures – or the attitude of looking for friendships among people of different cultural backgrounds;
>
> Intercultural effectiveness – or the ability to feel at ease in different cultural environments.

The second step is to establish a methodology to measure the changes that occur during and after the exposure to another culture. A recent survey, completed by Annette Gisevius[17] quotes five of the main tools available: the Intercultural Development Inventory, the Cross Cultural Adaptability Inventory, the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, the Overseas Assignment Inventory and the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory. The Intercultural Development Inventory is the more widely used.

Another aspect of success is the involvement of the host class and school. The presence of an exchange student in a class should not be seen as a burden but rather as an opportunity for the teacher and for the classmates. The link with a foreign school can be exploited in different ways: through running intercultural projects within the classroom where different cultural perspectives are discussed and compared; connecting a whole class with the class of origin of the foreign pupil via the Internet to broaden intercultural research; linking teachers and headteachers of the sending and hosting school to compare curricula and teaching/evaluation methods and so on.

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16. AFS Intercultural Programs (2005), *The Educational Results Study*, New York.
17. AFS Interkulturelle Begegnungen, e.V (2004), *The IDI in contrast to other tools for measuring intercultural competence*, Hamburg.

Success may spread to the local community, if the school that hosts foreign pupils is able to involve local authorities, cultural institutions, newspapers, radio and TV stations in the intercultural project. This may be done through exhibitions open to the general public, the involvement of host families in public debates on citizens' diplomacy, support campaigns with local banks and enterprises for the exchange programmes, encouragement of the local school authorities to promote intercultural education in the area and to promote international encounters that increase the social capital of a region or a country.

4.8. Long-term objectives of individual exchanges

Intercultural exchanges are a way of stepping out of the cage of one's own culture and seeing the world through different eyes. They enable pupils and teachers to approach global issues without the bias of one's own culture. An intercultural experience is a healthy prerequisite for global education: the topics of citizenship and human rights, of peace and development, of ecology and demography may be better understood if they are filtered through an intercultural approach, which looks beyond mere cultural identities and differences. The metanoia that comes through intercultural education helps to pave the way to:

– global citizenship;

– the practice of solidarity;

– the ability to resolve conflicts;

– intercultural ethics.

Working for global citizenship

In the Judaeo-Christian tradition the story of the Tower of Babel expresses the regret and the desire for a unity of humankind that has been lost. The 20th century has brought both new technologies, which create both the physical possibility and the illusion of belonging to one world, and strong, divisive local identities, a nostalgia for small homelands and a fear of being uprooted. The tension has grown between local and global issues, between loyalties to one's hometown and hopes for the planet. A state, where all human beings enjoy all human rights just by being human, has been the unfulfilled dream of many generations: "how to obtain unity in diversity and how to preserve diversity in unity".[18] Intercultural exchanges stimulate awareness of these issues.

18. Baumann, Z. (2004)*, Europe: An Unfinished Adventure*, Polity, Cambridge.

Teaching the practice of solidarity

Any effective, well-planned and well-managed intercultural encounter creates new feelings of solidarity. Solidarity may involve schools and teachers with more experience and others with less. It means co-operation between different social and ethnic groups of the same country, as well as international co-operation, especially with countries in the developing world, because the art of living together successfully on this planet cannot be a privilege for the rich and the powerful. Schools can make a great contribution to building feelings of solidarity through intercultural exchanges.

Improving the ability to resolve conflicts

Conflict is an inherent challenge in intercultural exchanges, as people with a different heritage, language, values and ways of behaving meet and learn to share their lives for a period of time. When an exchange is short, participants tend to hide their differences and to create an artificial environment of friendship. But differences cannot be hidden forever and longer exchanges force pupils, teachers and host families to go beyond the lowest common denominators between cultures, which hide conflicts without resolving them. The challenge of conflict resolution and of promoting understanding, harmony and peace in everyday life becomes a commitment and a learning exercise for anyone involved in an exchange.

Developing global ethics

Working on conflict resolution, solidarity and dialogue, is one way of giving new meaning and new vigour to democracy and of preparing a more humane order and justice for generations to come. Respect for cultural diversity should never fade into vague relativism without hope and vision, but it should acknowledge that there must be a common ethical basis that allows all people to live together as decent citizens of their country and of the world. This common ethical basis has been put into words by the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe in their charters and in many documents, which are the ultimate framework for any intercultural exchange project.

4.9. Facilitating intercultural education and exchanges

Finally member states must realise that the implementation of intercultural education and exchanges is hindered by negative situations in several areas. These have to do with logistics, bureaucracy, school organisation, different curricula and

teachers' attitudes.[19] They could be overcome through normative action by the governments of the member states. The following is a list of problem areas where action may be necessary:

– a lack of a normative legislation in most countries that recognises the value of intercultural exchanges. In terms of accreditation, it is unclear how the work done and the credits acquired abroad should be evaluated. In terms of finances, host families do not get a fiscal discount (child allowance) when hosting a foreign pupil, while families cannot deduct the costs of sending a child abroad. Even in terms of military service, obligations may interfere with the possibility of staying abroad on a full academic year programme (as is the case of Israel). In more general terms the status of "exchange pupil" is not recognised by most legislations and this situation makes residence and other permits more difficult;

– the lack of reliable and updated information on exchange programmes, exchange organisations and school requirements in the different European countries. Public information services should give more accurate information to teachers and parents on the value of intercultural education and exchanges and on the reliability of the organisations and programmes that are available;

– difficult visa and residence permit regulations for exchange purposes. The Schengen Treaty has made entry visas for non-EU citizens much more difficult to obtain. Other countries (such as the United States after 11 September 2001) have added complicated requirements and expensive fees to the previously simple process. Visa and residence permit regulations should be simplified for pupils on a recognised intercultural exchange.

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19. Other external obstacles also limit the possibility or the effectiveness of intercultural exchanges, but they are even more difficult to remove due to circumstances out of reasonable political control. These are for instance:
  – Dominance relationships in language hierarchy: some languages are perceived as "less useful" or more difficult to learn and the countries where they are spoken are perceived to be less desirable destinations for exchanges. In this case schools may still organise an exchange and use an "international" language as a lingua franca for communication.
  – Dominance relationships in country hierarchies: not all countries and cultures carry the same weight and image in today's world and pupils on an exchange do not always meet their colleagues on an equal footing – which is a desirable prerequisite for an intercultural experience. To a certain degree pupils abroad are seen as "representatives" of their country before being recognised as individuals: in the beginning their national identity is perceived above their individual identity and the different political weights of their countries may impact the intercultural communication negatively.
  – Political unrest, conflict, terrorism: many countries, also very close to Europe, cannot benefit from the opportunity of intercultural exchanges because their political context is not safe – or it is not perceived to be safe – for mobility projects involving minors.

- the cost of an individual pupil exchange. In a continent where education is usually free of charge, the cost of international exchanges is borne predominantly by parents who are not used to investing financial resources in the education of their children. Governments should at least consider the fees paid by parents for the intercultural exchanges of their children as tax-deductible. Tools to facilitate the participation of pupils from disadvantaged family backgrounds might include: grants from national or regional governments (such as already happens in Denmark and Norway at national level and in Germany and Italy at regional level); specialised bank loans; scholarships from foundations and private corporations; mobility grants established by the sending schools; intra-European projects set up by the European institutions;

- teachers' and headteachers' negative mindset. Many teachers do not consider pupils' mobility to be an important element of intercultural education, but as a marginal and isolated practice or even as a disruption and disturbance of the smooth running of the school. They are unable to appreciate and evaluate different school curricula and performance assessment systems in Europe. To overcome this problem, intercultural education and exchanges must become a part of teacher training in all countries;

- complicated school enrolment procedures are imposed on exchange participants. This can include lengthy procedures and translation requirements for documents. Often ministries of education do not provide any guidelines in this area, so that schools are uncertain of how to admit and evaluate a foreign pupil on an exchange;

- the requirement – introduced by an increasing number of schools – of a working knowledge of the national language before admitting an exchange pupil. A reciprocity rule in an open Europe should allow all pupils to go to all countries and should invite all schools to host pupils from all countries, without limiting the exchanges to pupils who speak languages taught at school;

- the lack of structured provisions (teaching time) to teach a working knowledge of the host country's language on the arrival of foreign pupils;

- the lack of intercultural mentors in schools, who can prepare their pupils before an experience abroad and counsel foreign pupils attending the school;

- considerable differences in school calendars from country to country.

Intercultural education and school partnerships

Rüdiger Teutsch

1. Context

Many international organisations as well as national ministries and private foundations welcome and support international school partnerships and intercultural exchanges as part of a solid approach to intercultural learning in schools. The effects of international school co-operation range from strengthening intercultural learning to an effective and direct impact on peace, human rights and environmental education. Moreover, school partnerships are to be encouraged and supported because of their potential to improve school quality, to deepen the European dimension in the classroom, to enhance the teaching and learning of foreign languages and to contribute to the social cohesion of European societies.

Within the Council of Europe attention has been paid to school links and exchanges for many years, and support has been provided to their development through teacher training activities and the development of educational material and national educational structures. Moreover, European networks have been established which stimulate exchange projects and other joint activities.

International school partnerships are understood as the educational framework for intercultural exchanges and other school-based activities using various approaches and methods to help young people to learn about partner countries and increase understanding of their cultures, languages, histories and in particular the life of young people living there. The most common forms of co-operation between schools are curriculum-related joint projects, mutual exchange visits of classes or groups of pupils, visits and job shadowing of teachers. Modern communication technologies allow inexpensive long-distance communication throughout Europe.

2. The impact of school partnerships

All types of schools can become involved in school partnerships and intercultural exchanges. There exist not only successful models of primary and secondary school partnerships and exchanges, but also vocational schools are making increasing use of cross-border co-operation in order to add a new dimension to their teaching and learning strategies.

In practice both teachers and pupils assess personal encounters as the most effective, stimulating and rewarding part of a long-term educational partnership during which they co-operate with colleagues and peers abroad. In this respect intercultural exchanges provide privileged access to everyday life in another country and encourage young people to see their world from a different point of view. Usually young people appreciate direct and personal contact because it allows them to get involved in face-to-face discussions and make new friends.

There is evidence[20] that intercultural exchanges have a positive impact on pupils when it comes to the development of:

– understanding, tolerance and openness;

– an interest in the other countries and cultures;

– an understanding of global developments;

– one's own horizon;

– foreign language learning.

A school partnership is not a one-off activity but the result of continuous and long-lasting endeavours that establish the foundations of mutual trust, true communication and essential learning.

The sustainability of international school partnerships is based on:

– strong institutional co-operation that involves all actors in school life including parents and other representatives of the local community;

– a thematic focus that is closely linked to the curricula of the partner schools;

– a strong commitment on the part of the teachers who continuously support and guarantee communication between the pupils before, during and after their intercultural learning experiences.

3. The preconditions for successful co-operation

When reflecting on the educational quality of international school partnerships and intercultural exchanges teachers often refer to their special personal and professional motivation. They base the quality of the exchange on their particular

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20. Zentrum für Schulentwicklung. Bundesministerium für Unterricht und kulturelle Angelegenheiten (1999), *Internationalisierung an Österreichs Schulen: Ergebnisse einer bundesweiten Erhebung im Schuljahr 1996/97*, Graz.

relationship with the colleagues abroad – mutual trust is seen as an indispensable ingredient for cross-border co-operation.[21]

In addition, teachers identify the following key factors for successful intercultural exchange activities:

– the extent to which exchange-related themes and activities can be included in the regular curriculum;

– the development of a team of teachers that co-operates professionally and enjoys cross-curricular teamwork;

– the motivation of pupils to engage in an unknown and unpredictable field;

– the social dynamics of the group of pupils and to what extent this allows openness towards the partner school;

– the support of the governing body of the school, which is aware that the whole school can profit from international initiatives;

– the involvement of parents who can serve as useful resources (foreign language skills, hosting pupils and teachers during exchanges, organisational matters, etc.);

– the interest and support of the local community, companies, non-governmental organisations, culture clubs or youth organisations (receptions, meeting venues and facilities, visits, cultural programmes, etc.)

Moreover, teachers point out that the intercultural aspects and phenomena such as uncertainty and resistance which occur in the course of school partnerships usually pose a considerable challenge to all involved. This kind of complex educational process is seen as an adventure that requires the courage to question one's own basic values and see one's own behaviour in the mirror of others.

4. Guidelines

Despite the fact that school partnerships provide a good opportunity for developing intercultural learning, practitioners often face challenges that limit or even reduce the learning potential. These guidelines aim to raise important organisational, methodological as well as didactical issues and to contribute to the quality of long-term international co-operation between schools.

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School partnerships need time

A partnership is something that needs to be developed jointly by all schools involved. It is the result of a long-term co-operation and needs to be supported systematically by all actors in the school community. Learning in partnerships is based on mutual trust that can only be established and deepened over the long term. Experiences show that international educational projects need to be planned carefully and with a long-term view in order to lead to good results.

Solid preparation

Newly established school partnerships may consider a start-up phase of approximately one year dedicated to getting to know each other on a personal, school and town/country level before planning an intercultural exchange of pupils.

Peer-to-peer communication by e-mail:

– helps pupils to lose inhibitions in the foreign language;

– helps to introduce oneself;

– stimulates reflection on one's own way of life, country and its culture;

– promotes interest in the partner country;

– helps pupils realise that the images of one's own culture and the culture of the partner country are affected by national media and other factors.

Teachers should help the peer-to-peer communication to stay focused on content and not on the technical aspects of information and communications technology.

Since a joint definition of the scope and focus of the work is desirable, teachers need to include some weeks for a participatory process of negotiation. This process can be initiated simultaneously in all partner schools and should definitely include pupils' proposals and ideas. The relevance of the chosen themes for the pupils often corresponds with their motivation to learn and to remain committed to the project.

Additional time needs to be allocated for setting up suitable evaluation instruments. Materials developed by the Council of Europe or based on Council of Europe standards might be of assistance in this endeavour.

Teachers and pupils may also decide to make use of a "partnership diary" that serves as a document of the educational activities as well as for putting down personal thoughts and feelings.

Mutually developed questionnaires can stimulate learning about each other's cultures and provide evidence of learning.

A "partnership newsletter" or a "partnership video" can serve as accompanying element and keeps records of the step-by-step development of the partnership.

Evaluation – in particular of the experiences of an exchange – is an indispensable part of any educational approach. It is recommended to include an evaluation phase when planning partnership activities, using interim evaluation as a stimulus for learning processes and dedicating sufficient time for reflection during follow-up activities.

Teacher co-operation

International school partnerships require the co-operation of teachers both within the individual schools as well as with teams of teachers at the partner schools. Only through co-operation within teams does it become possible to share the necessary (additional) work, to share responsibilities for a complex endeavour and make use of a cross-curricular approach involving, for example, science, language, history and physical education teachers.

Didactical diversity

A core element of international school partnerships is joint project work. In order to clarify aims, decide on methods, language/s and create an activity plan, careful preparation is indispensable. If possible, it is advisable that teachers from the partner schools meet for such a preparatory meeting in order to plan:

– the preparation phase including peer-to-peer communication;

– organisational issues for the exchange (travel, accommodation, pocket money, insurance, visa requirements, fundraising);

– the educational aim of the exchange visit/s;

– the cultural programme as part of the exchange visit;

– the documentation and evaluation.

Since educational cultures vary a lot throughout Europe, educational concepts and didactical approaches applied within school partnerships should be carefully discussed among the teachers from the partner schools. What goes without saying in one school may not be applicable in another. Teachers are encouraged to look at the differences with a professional, intercultural view and appreciate the varieties rather than judging what is right or wrong, out-dated or modern. The awareness of different ways of teaching and learning can enrich a teacher's own methodological pool.

Global scope and themes

School partnerships need to be focused on content and the relevance of that content to all partners involved. Suitable themes should address common challenges or issues of common concern rather than particular problems of one of the partners. Examples include "Living together in Europe", "Water – source of life", "What is European literature?", "Sustainable tourism", "Participation of young people", "Traditions of architecture", "Modern art in X and Y". Pupils should be involved right from the start in identifying the themes and activities to be covered.

Pupil participation

Pupil participation is not only desirable during the start-up phase of international school partnerships, but should become a constitutive element of an intercultural exchange. Pupils should be included in preparing the educational programme before the guests from the partner school arrive. They can also serve as representatives of the host families, guides within the school, tourist guides in the city, facilitators of an intercultural evening, or as reporters and editors of the "partnership newsletter".

Language diversity

Communication should be at the heart of international school partnerships. Though it is advisable to choose a working language, the use of all other languages spoken within the partner schools should be encouraged. The multicultural nature of European classrooms can serve as a valuable resource and exchanges can contribute to raising language awareness.

Inclusiveness

Activities within the framework of international school partnerships should be organised in such a way that all pupils can participate and contribute. Often the financial implications of travelling (including visa costs) and accommodation abroad are seen as major obstacles for full participation. Various resources for support do exist and should be consulted: the school-based parents association, local education authorities, the local government or local companies. It is more likely that fundraising approaches will be successful if the educational aspects of school trips are highlighted.

Fundraising activities organised by the pupils themselves not only generate financial contributions but also strengthen ownership of and responsibility for the joint project. Examples include organising a school bazaar, providing catering support for school events, publishing a student newsletter, organising a tombola, putting on a school play or holding a book fair featuring books from the partner country.

There are examples in many countries which show that exchanges can – if carefully prepared and implemented – have an enormous impact on the inclusion of disadvantaged pupils.

Gender equality

Bearing in mind the overall aims of international school co-operation, awareness of gender issues is a must. Questions of equal access, gender-specific needs, the implications of activities for girls and boys need to be considered while planning and implementing intercultural learning activities.

Religious diversity

School systems in Europe differ concerning the status of religious education. Some countries include religious instruction in the curriculum, some do not. In some countries the focus is more on knowledge about religions and a comparative approach to religious education. In any case, when planning and carrying out partnership activities, teachers need to reflect on the religious diversity of their pupils and ensure respect towards religious practices.

Multiperspectivity

Cross-border co-operation between schools should always work to develop the pupils' ability to see contexts, situations and phenomena from different angles. The presence of culturally diverse perspectives should not lead to a discussion on who is right about a certain issue, but rather it should enhance understanding of the cultural and social background to different points of views. There needs to be a clear conceptual distinction made and acknowledged between "comparison as evaluation" and "comparison as juxtaposition for heuristic purposes".

Sustainability

In order to ensure the sustainability of international school partnerships the initial enthusiasm for the project needs to become embedded in daily school life. The creation of a team of teachers responsible for guaranteeing a cross-curricular approach, and which shares the responsibility for the implementation of activities, as well as evaluating the progress of the project as a whole, is a crucial factor. A supplementary and continuing step is the project's integration into the school's profile.

Host families

Intercultural learning is not limited to the educational setting of the school and a few outdoor activities during an exchange. Living with a host family has great potential

for surprising situations and new experiences that stimulate intercultural learning. The differences in housing, food, the way of life, leisure time activities and family rules can all be explored in this context. Uncertainty, misunderstandings and even tensions can be part of the experience and should be used as a valuable resource for learning. Host families should be prepared in advance and be met after the exchange – the project should be a learning process for them, too.

Support

Partnerships need to be encouraged and provided with support and financial assistance. They need an appropriate legal framework, the approval of the educational authorities, good access to educational material, equal access to means of communication and financial support. The school governing board or the headteacher may be able to provide advice in order to clarify potential obstacles, and local and regional authorities or national ministries may support school activities through funds or in-kind contributions. There are also European programmes which support intercultural education projects. In this respect it pays to consult with teachers from the partner school.

Appendix – Some examples of school partnerships

School partnership at primary school level
Vienna/Austria – Tešanj/Bosnia – Osečanj-Doboj, Republica Srpska – Knaževac/ Serbia

The project was initiated in 2004 as a follow-up to a joint teacher training activity. Teachers from the participating schools wanted to stimulate European educational co-operation and support the teaching and learning of the mother tongue of Viennese migrant children originating from South Eastern Europe.

During the first phase the classes worked separately on the topic "Water – resource of our life". Then the pupils exchanged paintings and drawings which were presented at exhibitions in the participating schools. Some months later a visit to Vienna followed: teachers and pupils were hosted by families from the partner school, lessons were held in Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian. The school partnership has now become a permanent element of the educational practices of the schools.

ACES Academy of Central European Schools
Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia

Schools from 12 countries are currently involved in a programme supported by the ERSTE Foundation. Each year schools are invited to carry out cross-border initiatives enabling sustainable dialogue and co-operation between young people. Accompanying workshops and conferences help teachers and students to create a continuous network of shared knowledge, mutual learning and innovation. In 2008, 80 schools were awarded for their projects on "learning to live together".

EuroMed School Forum: "Intercultural Dialogue"
Austria, Denmark, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, the Netherlands and Turkey

Since 2006, 20 schools from Europe and the Middle East have been closely co-operating within the framework of the EuroMed partnership. Supported by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Austrian Ministry of Education schools formed thematic sub-networks dealing with important concerns such as natural resources, peace or the Euro-Arab dialogue. The classes used e-mail communication to develop the joint projects and met during "dialogue meetings" in Denmark, Israel and Jordan.

Intercultural education and the recognition of achievement

Francesca Brotto

1. Introduction

In 2005 the Council of Europe decided to evaluate and reassess its involvement in the organisation and running of the competition "Europe at School" which aimed at highlighting the European dimension in education.

At the same time, the Education Directorate carried out a consultation process to determine what shape its future action in the field could take to respond to the priorities set by the heads of state and government of the Council of Europe in 2005 (Warsaw Declaration and Action Plan) as well as the Wrocław Declaration on 50 years of European Cultural Co-operation. Both declarations underline the crucial importance of intercultural dialogue, exchange and education amongst and for Europeans in order to build a common European future based on the values and principles the Council of Europe stands for and promotes.

In considering how to follow up on the "Europe at School" initiative, it was felt that anything resembling a competition or a contest may be seen by schools as "just another project" removed from practice and not stimulating reflection on practice or innovation. It was therefore necessary to look for a different strategic perspective, something that would lead schools to review and rethink what they already do related to intercultural education, working to improve and innovate it. The logic behind this strategy is based on "recognition" and "valorisation" rather than "addition" or "juxtaposition".

Following discussions at the 22nd Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education in May 2007 in Istanbul, it was decided to look at the possibility of creating a Council of Europe "Label for Intercultural Education". This label would recognise and highlight innovative and effective initiatives in the member states in the field of intercultural education, as a realistic means of concerted action to promote intercultural education and awareness. This was considered a particularly timely contribution to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008.

The present contribution offers a detailed description of a possible Council of Europe Label for Intercultural Education, its rationale, possible structure and

implementation framework as well as its expected outcome. The label would not only recognise and highlight innovative and effective initiatives, but it would also create a Europe-wide network of schools stimulating partnerships and creating opportunities for a wide range of exchanges and activities.

2. Proposal for a Council of Europe Label for Intercultural Education at school

2.1. The setting

The 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue aimed not only to raise the awareness of Europeans of the benefits of cultural diversity, but to promote practices of intercultural dialogue that can help citizens acquire the openness, understanding and competences needed to cope with a culturally complex environment and to make a contribution to that environment in a fulfilling way. In order to pursue aims such as these, which necessarily transcend the limits of the European year, the mobilisation of civil society and, in particular, young people is especially important, as was highlighted in the Slovenian Presidency Background Note to the Council of the European Union "Intercultural Dialogue and Young People" (Note 5584/08 of 25 January 2008).

Schools can play a vital role to this effect. A strategic perspective is needed that will lead schools to review and rethink what they already do in relation to intercultural education, working to broaden what actually takes place in terms of understanding, learning and enacting intercultural behaviour and relations at school and outside it. The logic behind this strategy should be forward-looking but based on the "recognition" and "valorisation" of what schools are concretely doing to build intercultural competence within their own environments, whether at the classroom or school level, whether for the individual learners or for local communities. Rather than something else to add on or juxtapose to the curriculum, or something that benchmarks and compares achievement in competitive ways, we need to focus on how to extend the view of what is possible in intercultural education, recognising proactivity, creativity and competence building. This strategy can help embed practice that is "fit-for-purpose" and "fit-to-context", also stimulating the critical reflection necessary to assist schools in their development.

In many countries, education professionals, especially teachers, currently feel that they face dwindling social prestige, while having to confront the challenges of the increasing complexity of their roles (ETUCE, 2005; Compton and Weiner, 2008).

Material and even immaterial recognition for their work is thus perceived as a hard commodity to come by. This may partly explain the success of the European Commission's European Language Label for innovation in language teaching and learning, which has in more than a decade sparked and supported innovation in this field, by recognising the efforts and achievements of practitioners. It is felt that, in an analogous way, a Council of Europe Label for Competence-Building Practices in Intercultural Education at School may also act as a motivating lever fostering a change of mindset in practitioners and policy makers in relation to what intercultural education at school may mean and entail.

Good practices relating to the topic, both in formal and non-formal education systems, are naturally exchanged and commented on in a range of policy circles or policy research clusters at the European level and beyond. However, at the moment, there is no structured pan-European initiative of this sort promoted by a public policy authority.

Private enterprises and foundations have been acknowledging and rewarding intercultural education initiatives for some years. The corporate philosophy of responsible commitment of the BMW Group, looking at the needs not only of its employees but of society as a whole, has led the group to place Professor Hans Hunfeld's hermeneutic approach and theses of intercultural learning (1997) at the heart of their LIFE philosophy and the annual BMW Group Award for Intercultural Learning. This annual award was instituted in 1997 to reward new ideas and exemplary projects from all over the world that look at diversity as an enrichment. It comprises a "practice" category for different types of educational establishments and community organisations operating both in formal and non-formal learning environments and a "theory" category covering a broad range of disciplines in which academic papers may be submitted. In its biennial Prize for Intercultural Education the Evens Foundation, a philanthropic body, accepts award candidates from a variety of civil society institutions in Europe, such as NGOs, associations, educational establishments and foundations. A recent prize session was dedicated exclusively to schools in the three countries the foundation is represented in: Belgium, France and Poland.

On a broader level and with a specific focus on recognising excellence in partnership, networking and co-ordination for global education, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, together with Irish Aid, runs the World Aware Education Awards, working to make global education a sustained part of formal and non-formal education systems. Their remit is to reward a small number of global education awareness-raising projects developed in partnership between different

stakeholders. "Global education" here encompasses development education, human rights education, education for sustainability, education for peace and conflict prevention and intercultural education, all of which represent the global dimensions of education for democratic citizenship. This line of action clearly points to the capacity building of youth structures and organisations as a key to developing co-operation on the ground.

The above ideas, taken up on the micro-level of individual schools and, possibly, on the meso-level of local school authorities, together with the lessons from the multi-year experience of the European Commission's European Language Label, provide the background for the present proposal for a Council of Europe Label for Competence-Building Practices in Intercultural Education at School.

2.2. The rationale: looking for "next practice" rather than "best practice"

Concepts of intercultural education cannot be separated from a great sensitivity to context and a concern for sustainable development. This is why the current international trend of uncritical policy borrowing and the singling out of "best practices" in a number of fields carry with them – even involuntarily – the high risk of promoting standardised, recipe-book responses to complex problems. The dangers of such quick fixes have been widely commented on in research literature (Crossley and Watson 2003; Bottery 2004; Dimmock and Walker 2005), and not only in the specific field of intercultural education. If we are to support a transformational process, even in intercultural education, we need to foster foresight alongside hindsight, and "next practices" that can make sense of situations as they arise, rather than "best practices", or exclusive "excellence" models. What should be recognised and, possibly, rewarded is a range of intercultural education practices of different types, sizes and approaches, related either to single or cross-cutting issues, both in the classroom and at school level. These should sustain the creation of "action competence" (Jensen and Schnack 1994; Morgensen and Schnack 2010) in pupils, teachers and school management, in the development of sensitivity and awareness, knowledge and understanding, individual and community responses to intercultural situations, which may also provide culturally and emotionally enriching pathways to capitalising on diversity.

This means that it is necessary to consider the transformational process that schools are involved in, in their efforts to build their own capacity to deal with intercultural situations in a meaningful manner. Capacity building means more than simply providing the organisational conditions and infrastructure to support change. It also

means that positive learning is taking place at multiple levels in and around the school. While it is important to get a clear picture of the intercultural competences that schools have decided to focus their practices on, it is equally essential to get as clear a picture of what changes these practices have helped to produce or are helping to produce within the school and/or the local community.

2.3. The proposed organisation of the label scheme

Different levels of action are envisaged for the proposed strategy. The overall framework of the Label for Competence-Building Practices in Intercultural Education at School must reside with the Council of Europe. This means that the launch, co-ordination and support for the implementation and monitoring of the scheme and the dissemination of its results should be handled at European level, while the main management of the label scheme should be the responsibility of the member states. The implementation guidelines and timelines member states are advised to follow should also be established centrally possibly by an ad hoc task force as part of the pre-launch preliminary work. The European Wergeland Centre, which was set up in 2009 by the Norwegian authorities in partnership with the Council of Europe to promote education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship, may have an important role to play in this project. The direct implementation of the label scheme, meaning the promotion campaign and the application and evaluation phases, with all their administrative implications, should be handled at national level.

The awarding of the label, and of other possible complementary awards, could be handled jointly as follows, depending on whether member states wish to go beyond the "recognition" value of the label, to reward schools through support or incentives for networking and/or real encounters, either within or across borders.

The label itself – recognition. At European level, the scheme should focus on some common features but without uniformity. As a common denominator, this entails the setting of broad common principles and agreed criteria for the awarding of a label to schools which submit evidence of their competence-building practices in intercultural education. This evidence is examined and appraised at national or regional level by a nationally or regionally-appointed team (made up for instance of experienced practitioners, intercultural mediators, particular individuals, end-users or local/regional authorities). A school awarded the label may then use the label's logo. This would be a relatively low-cost initiative, involving the setting-up of a small steering group or ad hoc task force at European level for the initial kick-off, implementation and monitoring of the initiative, and a national body/task

force ready to handle the information, application, assessment and dissemination aspects on the national side. The label would be awarded to the selected schools in regional or national ceremonies and, if funding were available, a large biennial/triennial policy conference would be organised at European level looking at new ways of dealing with intercultural education in Europe. The conference might showcase a certain number of particularly noteworthy practices from the member states, so as to help share knowledge and examples of best practice. This would also provide a good occasion for representatives from national authorities to meet and exchange views on the label scheme.

A network of "label" schools – reward through belonging – virtual interaction and social capital. A further step in the process could involve setting up a virtual network of labelled schools, at regional, national and/or European level. Online support, including databases, could be provided to foster interaction and knowledge exchange, so that the schools have the possibility to learn from the intercultural situations which exist in their network. "Story links" for teachers and school leaders sharing narratives of how social capital has been extracted from intercultural challenges "within the walls" and "outside the walls" (Putnam 2004) of the schools could be featured on the platform. These stories could serve to generate social capital in other schools as well as providing possible material for research and even publication. If the parties involved can access available funding at EU or other levels, these virtual links could become levers for larger European projects, such as school partnerships or pupil exchanges. The scale of the virtual network initiative would depend on the priorities set and the resources available at European and national level. The European Wergeland Centre, mentioned above, might be an appropriate body to set up and handle the European level of the network. Governmental, non-governmental institutions and associations working in the field of intercultural education could also be active at national or regional level, providing network facilitation for the schools or support for the international/national meetings outlined below.

International/national meetings: intercultural encounters and emotional experiences fostering leadership for intercultural education. At yet another level (and with a larger budget), key players in the labelled schools could be further rewarded for their efforts through opportunities provided by the Council of Europe and/or individual national authorities, willing to sponsor or foster the sponsorship by third parties of international/national meetings, seminars, workshops or activity days. These would give the schools not only the opportunity to share experiences but would also provide them with incentives and motivation to continue

capacity-building work in intercultural education, with the aim of fostering inter-cultural education leadership roles by these schools on a regional or even a broader scale. Although all three of the proposed levels of the label initiative look at intercultural education practices as dynamic development opportunities for schools, this third dimension could focus on enhancing partnership building for large-scale community and/or international co-operation.

The different levels of action in the proposed label scheme are not to be taken as a package, but as an array of possibilities, with each member state deciding to take up what would best suit their policy environment and aims and the available resources. Apart from the basic label, recognising the work schools are doing, which all member states would hopefully accept to undertake, any further level of commit-ment at national level should be decided upon by member states and proposed at European level for inclusion in the overall framework of annual label initiatives, especially if this further work may have implications at an international level.

2.4. The target groups

The label scheme is targeted mainly at schools' intercultural education practices both "within their walls" and "outside their walls". In the first instance, the types of practices that might be granted the label would include:

– school policies for competence building in intercultural education;

– school governance for interculturalism;

– practices of learning to live in an intercultural society for pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff and school management.

In the second instance, candidate schools with a strong community outlook could be considered. This might include schools with:

– leadership and community partnership initiatives promoting a healthy intercul-tural environment and education within the local community;

– particular initiatives fostering intercultural awareness in the broader public undertaken by single schools or teams of schools at regional level;

– transnational co-operation partnerships, which jointly develop approaches, processes and tools for community involvement in intercultural learning.

A further, meso-level target group may also be considered on an experimental basis: namely local authorities responsible for either directly determining the educational provision of schools or for supporting schools in their provision to the community. If

these local authorities can present evidence of how their work proactively supports school action for intercultural dialogue, at some stage in the rolling out of the label scheme a specific section could be reserved for this category of players.

2.5. Commonality without uniformity: a common principle and broad criteria with space for national/regional priorities

The criteria in awarding the label need to be broad, but at the same time meaningful in diverse educational settings. It is necessary to take into account that what may appear to be small steps towards intercultural understanding in certain contexts may in other settings represent giant leaps forward. Since the objective is to promote contextually-relevant action, the point of departure must be the situation itself and the environment the schools are in. In addition, individual member states may also include criteria that can help promote specific intercultural education policy items on the national agenda. A reality check on the current policy situation in some European countries brings to light the fact that education for intercultural dialogue may not even be on the policy agenda and that schools in these countries may be given less support than in others when trying to deal with the issue. That is why the criteria themselves need to be interculturally sensitive.

This notwithstanding, the principle behind the criteria, whatever the context, is that they must help to identify practice that bears evidence of capacity building and "leaves a trace in the system", whether at classroom, school, professional or community level. As the criteria cannot be formulated in "one-size-fits-all" absolute terms but at the same time must avoid the pitfalls of cultural relativism, the focus must be on school development discourse, which can provide valuable insight into the possible features of the trace left behind. This might include the following:

– it promotes the development of intercultural competence;

– it is mindset-breaking and generates new viewpoints (or can lead to this) tied to non-negotiable values of intercultural learning, such as the respect for diversity, the acceptance of difference and of the constructive power of our differences, and the right of others to speak for themselves;

– it is embedded in a profound awareness of and sensitivity to the specific context in which one works;

– it recognises, encourages and involves the voices of diverse actors in the system and helps to build trust through an inherently collaborative process;

– it supports their discourse and critical reflections and helps map out courses of action;

– it sustains this action and helps to review and regenerate it;

– it uses the available resources responsibly and sustainably;

– it leads to system of learning over and above individual learning, whilst aiming to impact on individual as well as organisational attitudes and behaviour;

– it is perceived by those involved in that context to be authentically conducive to positive intercultural interaction, making a difference to these people.

A further list of possible indicators for capacity building is provided in the appendix. In keeping with the "fit-for-purpose" and "fit-to-context" philosophy of the label, the indicator areas are broad and open so that they can be integrated and tailored according to specific contexts, situations and needs identified by the individual schools.

We should note that the importance of deep "system learning" for intercultural education, particularly for teachers and trainers working in a multicultural school setting, was also underscored in the public hearing on multilingualism in Brussels in April 2008 (Brotto 2008), organised by the European Commission.

2.6. Application, selection and dissemination procedures

Annual (or biennial – depending on resources and priorities) campaigns could be organised inviting possible label candidates (schools or local authorities) to submit their applications to their national bodies/authorities, together with the required documentary evidence. The applications should be assessed by a national/regional jury comprising a number of important stakeholders, such as experienced school practitioners, intercultural mediators, particular individuals, end-users and local/regional authorities. The participation of the different stakeholders should be weighted according to the criteria set in the implementation guidelines, taking into account national, context-specific situations and priorities. If time and budgets allow, the juries might consider supplementing the documentary evidence received with telephone interviews and/or visits, especially for applications short-listed for the label. The guidelines may suggest an upper limit for the number of labels granted per country, based, for instance, on population size, but member states should be free to take a number of variables into account in deciding exactly how many applicants deserve to be awarded a label in each campaign.

National bodies should make every effort to grant visibility to the selected initiatives and to present the awards in a public ceremony. They should also disseminate the results of the campaigns in ways that effectively communicate the ideas

behind the practices. This should not, however, be limited to one-off one-way communication. A multiplier effect can be achieved if other initiatives related to the topic promote news about the campaign or the awarded initiatives.

At European level, whether the labels are awarded annually or biennially, the central steering group/ad hoc task force should meet at least once with the representatives of the national bodies handling the implementation of the scheme. With funding being the crucial issue it is, this meeting could be partly financed by member states (travel expenses, for instance), with a host country accepting to cover accommodation and subsistence expenses. A one and a half or two-day meeting could be envisaged. For the launch year, the meeting should be at the start of the campaign, while for successive editions the meeting could take place as a review at the end of each campaign (before starting the next), alongside a one-day European ceremony featuring a number of noteworthy label practices presented by member states. Alternatively, it might coincide with the biennial/triennial policy conference ceremony at European level, looking at emergent intercultural education practices, mentioned earlier in this proposal. Every effort should also be made at European level to achieve multiplier effects through other centrally organised initiatives, and collaboration to this effect should be sought with the European Commission, in particular with the Directorate General for Education, Training, Culture and Youth.

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Appendix – Capacity-building indicators

These are a number of indicators behind any school development process. For the purposes of the label scheme, these are to be considered in the light of the learning needed to develop the specific intercultural competence(s) the applicant schools have focused on in their practices.

The learning and teaching process

- evidence of pupils learning from one another (mutual learning) and with others (collaborative learning)

- evidence of individual as well as group learning

- evidence of reflecting on learning (meta-learning) by pupils (Are pupils led to reflect on how they learn and what sort of learning tools, styles and situations best enable learning? Is their voice valued in discussing how learning takes place during school time or out of school?)

- evidence of an inclusive learning environment (Are all pupils, regardless of their background or ability, made to feel at ease in their learning endeavours?)

- evidence of an engaging learning environment (Are pupils stimulated to actively participate in their learning? Is the work they are required to do made interesting and appealing for them? Is it meaningful? Is pupil motivation sustained in positive ways?)

- evidence of trust-building in teacher-pupil relationships (Do the ways teachers and pupils communicate with each other and treat each other lead to the creation of mutual trust?)

- evidence of pupil involvement in self-evaluation and formative assessment of their learning

- evidence of teacher awareness of and sensitivity towards the specific human and social contexts of their pupils

- evidence of organisational support and learning resources needed to achieve the learning aim (tools, materials, time, spaces and so on)

Staff professional development

- evidence of learning from one another (mutual learning) and with others (collaborative learning) by teachers and/or other school staff

- evidence of occasions for and practices of reflective professional inquiry (Do teachers look for and make use of ways to research and reflect on their practices both on their own and with colleagues, in order to discover better ways to improve student learning? Do other staff members make use of opportunities to reflect on their practices both on their own and with colleagues so they can improve their work?)

- evidence of coaching and mentoring schemes

- evidence of experimentation with new approaches

- evidence of a professional code of ethics being in place (Is reference made to any written or unwritten rules and guiding principles making staff members mutually and collectively responsible to each other and to the learners?)

- evidence of organisational support for innovation and experimentation with new approaches

- evidence of a sustainable supply and use of resources for professional development

- evidence of positive organisational conditions for professional development

Organisational learning

- evidence of a systematic and systemic inquiry orientation to understanding and solving the school's problems (Are robust self-evaluation practices in place? Are they used both at regular intervals and in ad hoc situations? Are all staff members encouraged and supported in using them?)

- evidence of symbols, rituals, ceremonies showing a school culture focused on learning

- evidence of stakeholder involvement in decision making (Are pupils, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, school management and community members' views sought when important decisions regarding the school and the services it provides need to be made?)

- evidence of distributed leadership (Is leadership in specific areas or for specific issues shared among different staff members or even with the pupils and parents? Is there evidence of the school fostering the growth of different leadership roles? Are different people taking on leadership roles?)

- evidence of sustainable time frames and organisational flexibility to support organisational learning

- evidence of the internal communication strategies set up to aid organisational learning

Community learning

- evidence of an analysis of the local context

- evidence of the school's leadership catalysing and supporting learning in the local community (Is the school engaged in local partnerships to foster concrete learning opportunities for youth, parents and other adults? Has the school set up its own community learning or awareness-raising initiatives? Is it seeking to develop approaches, processes and tools either on its own or collaboratively to aid community learning?)

- evidence of stakeholder involvement in planning and implementing community learning initiatives

- evidence of communication strategies between the school and the community to foster community learning

- evidence of the physical infrastructure, material and human resources the school invests in developing community learning

About the contributors

Francesca Brotto

Francesca Brotto is a secondary school head and experienced teacher educator currently seconded as senior aide and adviser to the Director General for International Relations of the Italian Ministry of Education and Research.

Her cross-sectorial duties have been related to educational consultancy, research and strategic planning, policy development, documentation services, organisational development, process support and supervision, project development, inter-institutional relations and liaisons development with cultural agencies and the organisation of dissemination and training initiatives. She has participated in expert groups for the European Commission and the Council of Europe on matters especially relating to language learning, intercultural and citizenship education, also impacting on school improvement and leadership. She has also advised on strategies to enhance the European dimension of education.

Currently her main fields of work regard OECD education policy work for Italy and she represents Italy on the European Commission's Standing Group for Indicators and Benchmarks.

Francesca has dual Italian-Canadian citizenship and speaks four languages and was a secondary school foreign language teacher in Umbria (Italy) for 25 years before taking up secondment.

Josef Huber

Josef Huber works in the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation of the Council of Europe, where he is currently responsible for activities in the field of intercultural education and for the Pestalozzi Programme, the Council of Europe programme for the training of education professionals.

Up until July 2006 he was involved in the Council of Europe's Higher Education and Research Division and was responsible for the organisation of two higher education fora on higher education governance (2005) and on the responsibility of higher education for a democratic culture (2006) and was co-editor of the ensuing publications.

From 1998 to 2004, as Head of Programmes and Deputy Executive Director of the European Centre for Modern Languages he was responsible for the centre's programme of activities and research and development projects and its

publications series on language learning and teaching, intercultural communication and language education policy.

He was involved in language education policy development in the Austrian Ministry of Education between 1992 and 1998 and was a language teacher in schools and at universities in Austria and abroad before that.

Katarzyna Karwacka-Vögele

Katarzyna Karwacka-Vögele is a researcher and PhD student at the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Medical University of Gdańsk (Poland). Her main areas of scientific interest are adult education, interpersonal interactions and the impact of the environment on individuals' well-being.

In 2010 she worked for the Council of Europe as an administrative support assistant in the EUR-OPA Agreement and Biodiversity Division where she was responsible for the co-ordination with the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations in carrying out the work programme of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement in psychosocial assistance to victims of disasters.

In 2009 she worked as a trainee and a temporary assistant in the Council or Europe's unit responsible for the Pestalozzi Programme and for the project "Intercultural education and exchanges" where she developed materials for the promotion of intercultural competence and intercultural dialogue. During that time she also co-operated with the Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Division as well as with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

She has a degree in educational and clinical psychology, pedagogics and dance and movement therapy.

Gerhard Neuner

Gerhard Neuner is a professor at Kassel University, Germany, who specialises in the theory and practice of the teaching and learning of German as a foreign language.

For ten years he was a member of the Goethe-Institute. From 1982 to 1990 he participated in several committees of the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* and since the 1980s he has contributed to a number of committees, campaigns and publications of the Council of Europe.

His main fields of research and interest are curriculum and textbook development and intercultural foreign language paedagogy.

Roberto Ruffino

Dr Roberto Ruffino is the Secretary General of Intercultura, an Italian agency for international pupil exchanges at secondary school level, established in 1955 as a non-profit organisation under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Intercultura is a partner organisation of AFS Intercultural Programs and a member of EFIL, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning. From 2007 he has also served as the Secretary General of the newly established "Intercultura Foundation" that promotes research and trials in educational exchanges. Since 2008 he has been the Chairman of the Board of EFIL and of the Italian Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research.

His main interest is the pedagogical content of international exchange projects and he has encouraged research in this field, by promoting symposia at the Council of Europe on topics such as, "Youth mobility and education" in 1978, "Cultural literacy and intercultural communication" in 1982 and "Common values for humankind?" in 1985. He has written books and articles on these topics and has carried out research for the European Union and UNESCO. In assigning him an honorary doctorate in education science, the University of Padua described him as "an entrepreneurial leader in the field of intercultural education ... the merit of his work in the field of educational exchanges is recognised and valued internationally" (21 April 2008).

Rüdiger Teutsch

Rüdiger Teutsch is head of the department "diversity and language policy, special needs education and inclusion, gifted and talented education" in the Austrian Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture. The department was initially estab-lished during the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008 in order to improve the educational outcomes of migrant students. The department's main aim today is to address a wider range of diversity aspects and help young people to fulfil their full potential in a globalised society.

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Education which helps citizens live together in our diverse societies is a matter of urgency. We all need to develop the ability to understand each other across all types of cultural barriers; this is a fundamental prerequisite for making our diverse democratic societies work.

This publication looks at the development of intercultural competence as a key element of mainstream education. It stresses the need firstly for an appropriate education policy which puts intercultural competence at the heart of all education and, above all, for the development, on an everyday basis, of the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge needed for mutual understanding. Without these, no sustainable societal change is possible.

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