

# SCHOOL CULTURE(S) – VALUES – IDENTITIES

## European Workshop Council of Europe Pestalozzi Programme

3 – 5 October 2010, Wels, Austria

### Report



This European Workshop, organised in the framework of the Council of Europe's PESTALOZZI Programme for the Training of Education Professionals, was aimed at discovering the significance of values (religious as well as non-religious) within school communities characterised by (increasing) socio-cultural diversity.

Nine teachers from Austria, five from Cyprus, two from Italy and one from Germany, Norway, Portugal and Turkey respectively, came together in Wels, Upper Austria, to approach this topic so significant in schools all over Europe. Participants represented various school types and different subjects, because diversity and values are transversal matters relevant to the whole school.

Eleven speakers from seven countries together with the participants approached the topic of values education connected to and linking an overarching school culture and the individual identity building process from different perspectives.

Claudia Lenz and Robert Jackson came through the kind support of our cooperating partner, the European Wergeland Centre (EWC). The workshop was part of the EWC's series of 'educators' consultations' on the issue of religion in education. Angelos Vallianatos came through the kind support of the Council of Europe and Agneta Ucko through the kind support of Arigatou International. Thank you to all the speakers for partly travelling far, for attending with interest and contributing so much to the whole seminar!

The seminar outline was practice and dialogue oriented, since dialogue is a means for better mutual understanding in the classroom and the basis for the democratic process of developing a school culture that acknowledges and values diversity.

A warm thank you to the team of Pädagogische Hochschule Oberösterreich and Private Pädagogische Hochschule Linz for support, excellent organisation and empathic moderation!

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## KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Robert Jackson, Warwick University, Special Adviser at the European Wergeland Centre



### The Religious Dimension of Education

In many European countries, religions were largely perceived to be a matter of the individuals' private sphere. This perception changed in the beginning of the new millennium. Since then, the Council of Europe (CoE) – among other international organisations – has been responding to religious diversity in European societies by emphasising the importance of religions for the education sector: Religions and beliefs are considered to be *at least* part of human culture (although, for religious persons, religion is *more* than just part of their culture). Consequently, religions and beliefs must be part of school education. The religious dimension is an aspect of intercultural education and education for democratic citizenship, and connected to a variety of fields like civic education, peace education, human rights, school ethos etc.

Depending on the background such as the historical tradition or a geographical position as well as socio-political economy system there are different general approaches for teaching religions and beliefs at school:

- Educating *into* religion is a confessional approach – it deals with a single religious tradition. “Insiders” teach insiders.
- Education *about* religion(s) is given from a descriptive and historical perspective in a neutral and “objective” way.
- Education *from* religion includes a reflection on what pupils learned *about* religions. Pupils consider different responses to religious, existential and moral issues.

### Resources

- “**Religious diversity and intercultural education: a reference book for schools**” was published by the Council of Europe in 2007 as the outcome of the project “The Challenge of intercultural education today: religious diversity and dialogue in Europe”. The book covers theoretical perspectives and concepts as well as various approaches to teaching and learning and examples of current practice in member states of the Council of Europe.  
<http://www.theewc.org/library/category/view/religious.diversity.and.intercultural.education.a.reference.book.for.schools/>
- The “**Recommendation on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education**” was passed by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2008. The recommendation’s aim is to ensure taking into account the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education as a contribution to strengthen human rights, democratic citizenship and participation, and the development of competences for intercultural dialogue. Read the appendix:  
<http://www.theewc.org/library/category/view/recommendation.cmrec200812.of.the.committee.of.ministers.to.member.states.on.the.dimension.of.religions.and.non.religious.convictions.within.intercultural.education./>
- The “**Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools**” were published by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the *Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)*. The OSCE’s argument is the freedom of religion and belief as a human right. A plural society requires mutual understanding and knowledge in order to be cohesive. The Toledo Guiding Principles emphasise inclusiveness (families, civil society, belief organisations etc.) and a whole school policy that advocates a school ethos valuing diversity.  
<http://www.osce.org/item/28314.html>

### Research

The EU funded project “**Religion in Education. A Contribution to Dialogue or a Factor of Conflict in Transforming Societies of European Countries (REDCo)**” revealed attitudes of 14 – 16-year-old pupils towards religion at school in eight European countries. (see also p. 10ff)

Some findings of the REDCo Project:

- ' Strong student support for applying democratic principles in classrooms
- ' Students see the classroom as a potentially 'safe space' for dialogue about religions. They need this safe space because they do not find it in the private context.
- ' Students want peaceful coexistence based on:
  - " knowledge about each other's religions and worldviews (they do not see this knowledge as a threat to their own religion)
  - " sharing common interests/doing things together
- ' Many students with a firm commitment do not feel threatened by a dialogue with others or by learning about others.

### School Culture – Value(s) – Identities in the Context of Diversity

School culture is a matter of individual aspects as well as whole school policies. In a non-supportive framework it is hard to deal with diversity in any aspect. One important question is whether or not a school overtly values diversity. Is the school open to the outside world in this respect? Is it possible to create safe spaces in a school? School is not a value-free zone – school shall promote tolerance and respect, which are preconditions for a democratic classroom.

Teachers have to help pupils to act out their individual freedom in responsibility to others.

School shall be a space where personal values can be reflected in the context of social morality and democratic citizenship.

The classroom is a space where pupils identify values they share. They realise that they share some values for different reasons – an "overlapping" values.

Pupils shall experience the difference between self-identification and alter-identification. How do we see individuals – and how do they relate to a bigger group? Do all Muslims pray five times a day? Who is a Sikh – a man with a turban?

### Pedagogical approaches

- Contextual approach: Knowledge is contextually bound – and every person looks at life from a different perspective. A contextual approach takes these viewpoints into account and starts from where the children are.<sup>1</sup>
- Interpretive approach: The representations of religions reflect their inner diversity (taking into consideration the link between the individual, groups and a wider context). Stories are an important source for this approach. Language is to be taken seriously in order to understand other people's concepts. In order to increase understanding, pupils have to reflect the impact of their new learning on their previous understanding. Knowledge is transformative and enables an individual to change attitudes.<sup>2</sup>
- Dialogical approach: Pupils are involved in planning a structured dialogue. Julia Ipgrave identified different levels and different types of dialogue. Starting from the acceptance of diversity, persons can open up to difference and only then interact in a dialogue of life or a dialogue of experience, a dialogue of action or a dialogue of faith/belief (see *presentation in the annex*). Dialogue of faith involves ultimate questions such as "is there a God?", "what does 'good' mean?",

How do you present religions without stereotyping them?  
How do you recognise the specific positions of young people in class?  
How do you link individual positions to groups and 'whole' religions  
How do you combine a critical stance with a reflective one?

Robert Jackson: Interpretive approach

<sup>1</sup> Further reading: Heid Leganger-Krogstad "The Contextual Approach", in: "Religious Diversity and Intercultural Education. A Reference Book for Schools", p. 99ff; [http://www.theewc.org/uploads/content/Religious\\_diversity.pdf](http://www.theewc.org/uploads/content/Religious_diversity.pdf) (p. 66ff)

<sup>2</sup> Further reading: Robert Jackson "The Interpretive Approach", in: "Religious Diversity and Intercultural Education. A Reference Book for Schools", p. 79ff; [http://www.theewc.org/uploads/content/Religious\\_diversity.pdf](http://www.theewc.org/uploads/content/Religious_diversity.pdf) (p. 52ff)

"why is there suffering in the world?" It is essential for the individuals and class/school community to have a safe space at school for such questions to be asked and to be reflected on together.

[Please find the list of references and the PPT presentation in the annex](#)

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## DIALOGUE - ROUND OF INTRODUCTIONS

Angelos Vallianatos, CoE Pestalozzi Network

The **PESTALOZZI Programme** is the Council of Europe programme for the professional development of teachers and education actors. Our seminar, "School Culture(s) – Values – Identities", is a European Workshop in the framework of the Pestalozzi Programme.

The main goals of the Pestalozzi Programme are to place the Council of Europe's core values at the centre of our education systems: respect for **human rights, democracy and the rule of law**. Teacher education is essential in this process. By means of the Pestalozzi Programme, the Council of Europe supports teachers and other educational actors in their role as professionals in the increasingly heterogeneous and multicultural societies in which we live.

Our seminar is an opportunity to work together on topics which concern us all: The Pestalozzi Programme supports personal and professional relationships across Europe and beyond. A big community of like-minded teachers and trainers has grown to share their experiences as to common concerns and bring experiences and knowledge back home into their own professional context. [www.coe.int/Pestalozzi](http://www.coe.int/Pestalozzi)

The seminar "School Culture(s) – Values – Identities" tackles some core questions for teachers in a society shaped by pluralism: What ambitions do I have as a teacher? How do I contribute to widen horizons and raise mutual respect? How do we live together – what does it mean to be part of society? How do we deal with life, love, respect? How do we improve self-confidence? Do we appreciate what we do not know and keep our curiosity alive? We have to deal with each child in a different way and give every pupil the opportunity to be good at something.

Legislation deals with these questions in one or the other way. Within the Pestalozzi programme we exchange ideas and experiences **HOW to do this in practice** and bring new training experience back home and to the programme.

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## Introduction - Who am I?

Participants introduce themselves in small groups referring to one of the following questions, which were part of the preparatory task:

- What is the "core set" of underlying values concerning your school's culture? What are your personal values? Do your personal core values play a role in your methodology regarding the education of young people?
  - What ambitions would you like to achieve as a teacher? (teach my topic / educate my students in a broader sense? What does this mean for you?)
  - What values characterise your school's culture? How does your school face (socio-cultural) diversity?
- 



## “Take a step forward” - Who are my pupils?

adapted from a Compass<sup>3</sup> activity [http://www.eycb.coe.int/compass/en/chapter\\_2/2\\_38.asp](http://www.eycb.coe.int/compass/en/chapter_2/2_38.asp)

In this activity, teachers step into their students' shoes to experience what it is like to be someone else and sense diversity from a different perspective. Every participant gets a role card with some basic information about a last year high school student. The different roles reproduce cultural diversity existing in schools.

First, all participants visualise their day in their new role according to the role card following the moderator's questions:

How is your house? Where is your house? What do you see out of the window? What do you hear? You get up in the morning to go to school. What do you do? Time to go to school! On foot? Alone? With other people? You arrive at school. Your first gathering – first hour is a maths lesson. How may you feel? Break – how is it? History. Language lesson. Break – what do you do? Religion lesson. Break. Gym. Geography. Music. School is over – you are back home – what does this mean? What do you have to do? Prepare for tomorrow? Meet friends? It is night. You go to bed...

Concluding, please reflect on two main questions: What is “your” near future like? What is the far future like?

Participants are still in their roles and line up in the back of the room. The moderator asks questions. Those participants who out of their role affirm a question (“yes”) take a step forward. Those who negate a question (“no”) stay where they are.

- Do you have pocket money?
- It is no problem how late I can come back home on weekends.
- I do not feel different from my school's society.
- I have never felt discriminated because of my origin.
- I have never felt afraid of being stopped by the police.
- My language, religion and culture are respected in the society where I live.
- I have failed at exams – I have no problems to announce this at home.
- I have a place at home where I can study in peace.
- If I have a question, my parents can help.
- We go for holidays at least once a year.
- Inviting friends is not a problem for me.
- I can pick a profession of my choice.
- If I cannot get into university, I will study abroad.
- I go to the movies once a week.
- I get new clothes once in three months. I choose my own clothes.
- I will fall in love with the person of my choice.
- I am not afraid of being harassed in the street or by media.
- I can discuss school gossip with my parents.
- I have no problem choosing friends at school.
- I have an interesting life – I am positive for my future.

Debriefing and evaluation: Participants reflect on the following questions – some of them are invited to share the answers.

How does it feel to be where you are? In the first row? In the last row? In the middle?

You won to spend three days at a nice place somewhere – who do you choose to invite to come with you?  
If you are a leader of a basketball team – who would you choose as members?

Where did you get the information about your role?

If people have same roles as I – are they in the same positions?

What kind of people do you think they are - in front/in back?

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<sup>3</sup> Compass. A Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People <http://eycb.coe.int/compass/>

At the end, participants reveal their roles à this could be an everyday classroom. Much is hidden – although we are the same, in reality this works differently. We should ask ourselves whether we have the time, the knowledge and information to deal with a student the way she or he needs to be dealt with.

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### School Culture: A Dialogue Process

A democratic school meets pupils in their needs and not only respects diversity but also deals productively with diversity. A democratic school culture/school ethos is based on a democratic dialogue process between all persons concerned. It is important to creatively deal with different perspectives and values aiming at reaching a common goal and agreeing on shared values. It is important to actively and continuously reflect the world views, values and norms that determine a school's culture.

Participants were invited to suppose that they were the teachers of a certain school and met for a dialogue process for the development of this school's culture.

We want to get to know each other. Who are we, what are our values, what are our strong areas? What shall be our school vision/our school mission – what do we contribute to make it real?

We want to find our concrete goals – how would we like to improve our communication?

What if my values differ from the “accepted” values of the school? How do we check whether the school's values are realised or not? We are free to have our personal values and have the right to think differently. We need to be clear. We have to live knowing and accepting that there are different ways.

The following aspects were tackled or suggested in the plenary

- Among teachers: Continuous constructive dialogue and respect for different backgrounds and perspectives; discussion of preconceived ideas and prejudices
- Integration of the students in decision making processes, because they have the expertise in their needs.
- Details that help all persons concerned to feel as a community: start the day with a song, shake hands to notice each person etc.
- Positive, aesthetic, clean and welcoming school environment à better life for everybody
- We want to analyse our school's character, talk about advantages and disadvantages and reflect on the social context.
- School has to decide about its priorities.
- Involvement of parents in school life
- We have to share information about our students – who are they and what diverse needs do they have? We should have an individual educative plan for our students that focuses on their needs and at the same time follows the curriculum.
- Students should have the opportunity to communicate their cultural identity through objects visible at school.
- Local community participation – what is the specific context in which our school functions?

Conclusion: Everyone has to know the rules of the school and should know each other à work together, find ways of common consensus. A school can decide many things. It is important that the school community, including the parents, is involved in the decision making process.

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### KOHELET 3

The Trio from Linz Kohelet3 set an inspiring example of how dialogue works in music beyond borders, language and differences. “Music, (like dance and performing) is common human language where diversity can be an element of uniting people” (Angelos Vallianatos).

<http://www.kohelet3.at/>



## COUNCIL - THE ART OF LISTENING AND SPEAKING FROM THE HEART

Galit Hanien and Itaf Awad

The way of council is an ancient method of the Native American culture. Jack Zimmermann made this method popular in other societies. As a school manager thirty years ago he introduced this way of communication based on inspiration in a school where interaction did not work. The council method allowed to experiment with communication without being too structured. Through this success at school, the method became popular beyond.

The council method is not new for anybody – it exists in a certain way in every culture and inside every person. It is a process of sharing stories and deep attentive listening.

There are **four intentions**:

- 1) Talk from your heart trusting the people around you and trusting yourself!
- 2) Listen to others with respect – compassion without judgement, even if you do not agree!
- 3) Talk spontaneously – bring your first feeling into the circle!
- 4) Share the essence of your story, be lean/concise!

Participants sit in a circle around a **centre**. This centre can be arranged in a creative way. A candle is lit to respect the ancestors.



Every participant has a place and has the choice to talk or not. Silence is accepted and respected.

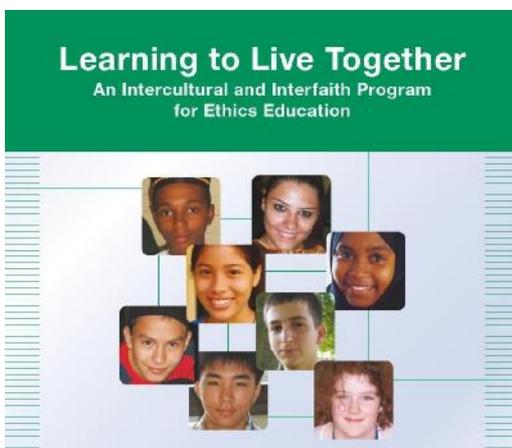
If a person has to say something, he/she picks up a **talking piece** from the centre. Only one person talks at a time! If another person wants to express a consensus or support for a person who is talking, he/she can say "HO!". Having finished, the talking piece is put back in the centre and can be picked up by someone else.

[Please read the summary by Galit Hanien in the annex](#)

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## VALUES EDUCATION – LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

Agneta Ucko, Arigatou Foundation



Agneta Ucko is the director of Arigatou International, an NGO working for the rights and wellbeing of children, with the headquarter in Tokyo and a liaison office in Geneva.

Arigatou's programme for ethics education "**Learning to Live Together**" is based on four main ethical values: **respect, empathy, responsibility, and reconciliation**. The manual "Learning to Live Together – an Intercultural and Interfaith Programme for Ethics Education" is divided into two modules

1. Understanding Self and Others (respect, empathy)
2. Transforming the World Together (reconciliation – inside and outside)

In the manual you can find examples of different education contexts – exercises can easily be adapted to any local context.

[Please find an outline on the Arigatou Foundation and the international ethics education initiative Learning to Live Together in the annex](#)

Actions (examples from the *Learning to Live Together* training kit)

<http://www.arigatou.ch/mm/file/Learning%20to%20Live%20Together%20En.pdf>

**Reach for the stars** (see training kit p. 77)

All participants get a sheet of paper with a big star drawn on it. The paper is perforated. Everybody fills in the points of the star

- 1) a person that means a lot to you
- 2) your religion
- 3) a favourite activity
- 4) a favourite place
- 5) favourite music



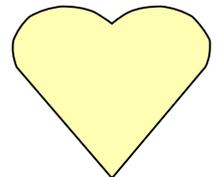
Put the star by means of a string around your neck. Walk around in silence and have a look at the other participants' stars

Then build several groups of people. Share what you have written with each other. Are there differences, similarities?

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### Heart activity

Everybody gets a sheet with a heart. Write down in the heart something that means a lot to you. Then discuss what you have written with another person. Exchange sheets. The facilitator gives order to crumple the sheets. You then flatten the sheet and make it as tidy as possible to give it back to your partner. How do you feel? Reflect with the plenary.



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### What I stand for (see training kit p. 78)

The room is divided into two parts (e. g. by marking a line with adhesive tape) – one side is marked with an “I agree” sign, the other one with an “I disagree” sign. The moderator reads some statements. All participants find their position on either side of the line – standing far away from the line means “I completely agree/disagree”. Standing closer to the line, they express less determination.

Statements (examples):

- >> All children should be able to go to school.
- >> Only the cleverest have the right to education after 14 years.
- >> Killing someone for any reason is wrong.
- >> People have the right to fight for what they believe in.
- >> Everyone has the right to live in peace.
- >> No one should have to live under occupation by another country.
- >> Everyone has a right to be respected.
- >> I only give respect to those who respect me.

- >> Pollution is the responsibility of governments.
- >> It is pointless to always put litter in the bin when others do not.
- >> Everyone has a right to practise their religion.
- >> Religions are a major cause of conflict in the world.

The moderator asks some participants for their reasons for choosing their position.

## THE REDCO PROJECT

Claudia Lenz, The European Wergeland Centre

The **European Wergeland Centre (EWC)** is a European resource centre - established in cooperation between Norway and the Council of Europe - on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship. The EWC aims at bridging policy, research and educational practice and is following up on several initiatives, research and other projects of the CoE and other institutions.

It is open for cooperation with teacher trainers, teachers and other persons in education in all 47 member states of the Council of Europe. Furthermore, there are projects and cooperation with institutions in the Mediterranean area. <http://www.theewc.org/>

The **EWC library** contains a growing number of interesting resources within the EWC's thematic fields. Many of them can be downloaded for free. You are invited to inform the EWC about reports and papers that might be interesting for the library. <http://www.theewc.org/library>

**Share & Connect** is a database for people working in the field of education for human rights, democratic citizenship and intercultural understanding. It aims at connecting people to share experiences and expertise both in Europe and beyond. At a later stage, project suggestions will be spread through the database. You are invited to create your own profile. <http://www.theewc.org/network>

Diversity of religions and beliefs is a topic that touches upon all three central elements of the EWC mandate (education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship). The EWC organised a series of events on the issue of religion and beliefs to focus on the key findings of a European research project "Religion in Education - a Contribution to Dialogue or a Factor of Conflict in Transforming Societies of European Countries" (REDCo) and share them with educators. REDCo explored the attitudes of young people about personal experience with religion focusing on classroom interaction in eight European countries: How do young people perceive religion? What are their attitudes – are they more related to conflict or dialogue? Does dialogue about religions and beliefs have the potential to promote the peaceful coexistence of people in Europe? What are students' wishes concerning religion at school?

The results on the one hand reflect the diversity of educational systems and different concepts in religious education. On the other hand, however, major tendencies are reflected in common results:

- Young people ARE interested in religious topics. Irrespective of their religious position, the majority is curious to learn about religions.
- The majority of students appreciated the religious heterogeneity in their societies, although a range of prejudices were expressed.
- Students want and express the need of knowledge for a better dialogue on beliefs.
- School is a desired "safe space" for encounters with the convictions of others, where young people negotiate their own identification.
- More teaching *about* and *from* religion would be appreciated by pupils, because school is seen as a potential space without indoctrination. They want to be given a fair opportunity of getting to know the differences.

<http://www.redco.uni-hamburg.de/>

<http://www.theewc.org/ucontent/ongoing.projects.and.results/>

The dialogue events – our seminar being one of them - aim at contributing to a better understanding of how to facilitate dialogue within multicultural classrooms, so that diversity results in understanding rather than in tensions between students.

The REDCo project results were disclosed in nineteen scientific publications. Main results were compiled in political recommendations for policy makers.

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## Discussion

Participants were invited to work with some recommendations of the REDCo project results (bold letters): Please reflect on whether they make sense for you. How do they correspond with your experience in your classroom? Do they appeal to your own professional ambition? What could you do in order to meet the aims of a certain recommendation – what specific actions could you take? Study the following recommendations and choose one that especially resonates with you! Participants gathered around the recommendation of their choice and discussed in small groups.

- **Develop and strengthen skills for dialogue between pupils concerning different religions and worldviews.**

Results of discussion:

Everybody – teachers also – has to learn about different religions: Knowledge about other religions is necessary in order to discuss.

Pupils must be given opportunities for discussion – we have to make it safe for them and give them time

We have to examine stereotypes, because lack of knowledge creates stereotypes.

Opportunities for encounter

Teacher's role is learner and teacher

- **Inclusion of learning about different religious and secular worldviews in their complexity and inner diversity.**
- **Counter stereotypical images of religions, present more complex images that show the impact of religion on society and the individual.**
- **Provide opportunities for engagement with different worldviews and religions (including cooperation with local communities in order to increase exchange between different religious and non-religious groups) and offer opportunities for encounters between students of diverse positions vis-à-vis religion.**

Results of discussion:

Provide face to face encounters: within schools, international encounters with other schools, encounters between school and community etc.

Exchange of teachers and experts: learn from someone who comes from a different context.

Provide a safe space to enable real stories: students shall feel safe, equal, connected, comfortable and free

Methods: games, role plays etc.

Teachers need to respect diversity and not ignore it; prejudices should be kept back, personal beliefs must not interfere.

It is important that students feel the genuine interest of the teacher and fellow students.

Celebrate certain events in a historical, traditional or political context (open days, parties): share traditions, music, food etc.

Visit religious sights.

Invite "living books" to the school: persons from different contexts who have stories to tell.

- **Offer opportunities for students to learn about and give space for discussions on religions.**
- **Religious education and learning about religion must incorporate education for understanding and tolerance and take account of children's differing needs as they develop.**

Results of discussion:

Support children in their identity building as members of different groups with people who love them.

Make it clear that difference is "normal": everybody is different in their favourites, hobbies, needs etc.

Express feelings and talk about feelings.

Celebrate different religious feasts during school year and invite guests.

Discuss stories of different holy books.

- Prepare educators in different subjects to treat religious topics relevant to their subject ensuring the inclusion of students regardless of their religious and non-religious background.
- Train educators in methods that support and encourage students to be comfortable with difference and to engage with the diversity of their personal experiences.

Results of discussion:

Teachers must be provided with the proper tools.

Learning always has to be based on personal experience. Teachers shall be exposed to these experiences in order to be sensitised.

Should such training be voluntary or compulsory? Maybe this should depend on the situation (monocultural or plural).

Conditioning: diversity should be seen as an enriching resource.

S staircase model: address all levels as far as possible.

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## IDENTITY BUILDING IN A PLURALISTIC SCHOOL

Dudu Kücükgöl, Muslimische Jugend Österreich (Austrian Muslim Youth Organisation)

Teachers should be managers of diversity and support pupils in their identity building process through dialogue and communication. First, we have to be aware of ourselves. The following activity aims to sensitise group members for the complex phenomenon of identity.

### *Identity cake activity*

Draw a circle on a piece of paper and then divide it in parts of different sizes. Put in the different aspects of your identity – choose the size according to importance.

Now the moderator reads different aspects: All participants who share a certain aspect of identity stand up (e. g. *teacher, mother, friend, Christian, human being, man* etc.)

Everybody has multiple identities. We have differences, but at the same time we also have similarities.

Differences must not be denied. It is important to talk about challenges and problems – not driven by fear, but by curiosity and interest.



Some identities cannot be chosen (to be a daughter, to be born in... etc.), some can (to become a mother, an actress etc.).

It is important to discuss the Phenomenon of alter identification: Features that are attributed by others. Concerning religions, it is important to keep in mind the big variety that exists *inside* religious groups.

Participants stated that there was a lack of information in many schools, and said that the connection of Islam to terrorism, Islam family issues, disregarding of others, the fear towards Muslims, identities and minorities were difficult issues to be addressed.

Dudu Küçükgül proposed some practical things that in her experience help students to feel accepted in school community, like congratulating students on personal celebrations, organising discussions and subject research or dedicated weeks at school. Small things make children feel welcome. As a rule it is important to approach differences in a non-judgemental way.

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## A GLOBAL ETHIC NOW!

Michael Weiss, Global Ethic Initiative Austria

The **Global Ethic Foundation** carries out and encourages inter-cultural and inter-religious research; stimulates and implements inter-cultural and inter-religious education and enables and supports such inter-cultural and inter-religious encounter necessary for research and education.

<http://www.weltethos.org/dat-english/index.htm>

Underlying the **Global Ethic project** is the basic conviction that there can be:

- No peace among the nations without peace among the religions.
- No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions.
- No dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundations of the religions.

The "Declaration towards a Global Ethic", drafted by Professor Hans Küng, was endorsed by the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1993. With this declaration, for the first time representatives of all the religions reached agreement on principles for a global ethic and committed themselves to four irrevocable directives, which took the following concrete form:

- Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life.
- Commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order.
- Commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness.
- Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women.

**A Global Ethic now!** is the name of an online multimedia learning platform in three languages (English, German, French) of the Global Ethic Foundation. Target group are persons of any age group, but mainly young people. The platform provides resources for ethical education and promotes the idea of the Global Ethic project. There are films, photos and texts providing information and also asking questions for reflection. The global ethic forum provides a platform for interaction.

Pupils can explore ethics and the Global Ethic idea in the context of different areas such as politics, economy, religions and religious diversity. There is also a section about Global Ethics and ethical behaviour in every day life. A global ethic can serve as a basis for a new school culture. The aim is to sensitise people for questions and also dilemmas of ethical concern and inspire them to reconsider their attitudes and behaviour.

<http://www.global-ethic-now.de/index-eng.php>

Contact: Stephan Schlensoğ, Secretary General of the Global Ethic Foundation [schlensoğ@weltethos.org](mailto:schlensoğ@weltethos.org)

The **Global Ethic Initiative Austria** is designed to make the "Global Ethic Project" better known in Austria, i.e. to promote ethical consciousness and to cause the grand ethical principles to penetrate into all branches of life. The initiative organises interdisciplinary lecture series at Austrian universities and promotes the introduction of ethics education in the schools with the declaration "Toward a Global Ethic" as a part of the curriculum. Schools and institutions can rent the travelling exhibition "World Religions – Universal Peace – Global Ethic". <http://www.weltethos.at/>

## CREATIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

Gregory Kennedy-Salemi and Stuart Jolley, IFOR Austria

IFOR – the **International Fellowship of Reconciliation** – is an organisation that actively seeks to use positive, nonviolent means to transform unjust social, political and economic structures throughout the world. IFOR's dynamic international team is comprised of people of diverse backgrounds who are united in their commitment to **active nonviolence** and enacting **social change**. IFOR is represented by branches (e.g. the Austrian branch), groups and affiliates in more than 53 countries all over the world, maintains permanent representatives at the UN and is affiliated with UNESCO and ECOSOC.

IFOR's activities revolve around a central belief in the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the dedication to eliminating fear and hatred and the structures from which they result. Their efforts include, but are not limited to: working for disarmament, creating awareness through public education campaigns, training programs and fostering interfaith alliances.

IFOR Austria also conducts global education school projects and media training workshops seeking to empower and creatively inspire youth by giving young people the skills they need to become active citizens and young peacemakers.

<http://iforaustriaglobaleducation.info/>

### Creative Conflict Resolution in School and Society

Creative Conflict Resolution in School & Society is a visually interactive DVD project connected to the IFOR Global Education seminars in schools. The project was designed to deepen teachers', students' and individuals' understanding of the various dimensions surrounding conflicts, while at the same time promoting tolerance and mutual understanding across religious, historical and cultural divides. The interactive DVD introduces and explores the societal impacts of conflicts from multiple perspectives. It features filmed activities and interviews with Nobel Peace Prize winners, IFOR conflict resolution professionals, musicians, teachers and students, including lessons on conflict in daily life, Intercultural & Interreligious Conflict, Fair Trade versus Free Trade, Environmental Conflicts & Sustainability, Freedom of Expression & Democracy, Gender Issues, Creative Conflict Transformation and Peer Mediation. Teaching materials and ready to use printable lesson plans and worksheets are included in order to make it easy for a teacher or a workshop facilitator to immediately utilize in the classroom or in a workshop.

Some exemplary clips:

[http://iforaustriaglobaleducation.info/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=123&Itemid=138](http://iforaustriaglobaleducation.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=123&Itemid=138)

Further information: [iforaustriaglobaled@gmail.com](mailto:iforaustriaglobaled@gmail.com)

#### *The freedom writers' diary*

Gregory and Stuart used the "Freedom Writers" true story to connect their students to real people today and in the past who were exposed to conflicts, violence, discrimination, intolerance and racism. It is about a teacher who introduces her students to a different way of dealing with these issues – mainly based on writing down thoughts, feelings and experiences in a diary and exposing them to diaries written by Anne Frank and Zlata Filipovich.

<http://vimeo.com/10721298> (Erin Gruell, author of "The Freedom Writers' Diary" and Zlata Filipovich, author of "Zlata's Diary")

### Exercises

#### *The Banana Quiz*

traces costs from the farmer to the supermarket asking who gives what in a fair trade versus a normal banana transaction.

#### *The line game*

Mark a line in a room. The moderator makes different statements starting with casual topics such as: Everyone to



the line who had breakfast this morning, ... who is a mother or father, ...  
Later, the moderator touches on more sensitive topics such as: Everyone to the line who witnessed racism, ... who has a Muslim friend, ...

### *Minority and majority*

Participants form a circle. Only one person stays out. The circle has to come up with a strategy to prevent outsider to get in the middle of circle without using violence.  
In the end, participants reflect on power structures in society.

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## **IDENTITY – VALUES – PLURALISTIC SCHOOL**

Chibueze Udeani, Catholic-theological Private University Linz

We live in a pluralistic society that is characterised by different facets of pluralism.

We have to be aware of the inner dynamics in plurality and the complexity of interchange of different dimensions – that is why we face difficulties with how to approach pluralism.

Religion and culture are two phenomena that are interlinked and play a role in all aspects of pluralism.

Our identity is in constant change within us – this process will never come to an end, because identity is not a static factor. Identity is a process between me and the other. It is through encounter that we come to a real understanding of ourselves, and there is an essential correlation between me and the other. Neither the other nor I are homogeneous. The other within a close range also defines who I am. I have to know who I am in order to establish a balanced relationship with the other. Pupils – supported by their teachers – need to become aware of their own strengths (and weaknesses).

In an identity finding process we have to realise who we are and who the other is – although we do not define the other. Everybody has the right of self definition – and we have to be ready to listen carefully and change our view accordingly.

School has to serve value cultivation in a complicatedly diverse context. Pupils have to get the chance to become aware of and reflect the relationship between their values and the values of others.

How do we deal with a plurality of values and world views in a constructive way?

The relationship between teachers and pupils plays a fundamental role in this process. Teachers have to be ready for self-reflection: How do I understand myself as a teacher? Do I give room for the pupils' internal values? Or do I choose to ignore them? Do I impose my own values on pupils?

A cultivation of values also means that we must not suppress the values of any minority.

History is characterised by an imposition of values by dominant cultures. During Egyptian, later Greek and Roman supremacy etc. and till this day, minorities' values have been suppressed.

On the contrary, teachers have to become used to identities with multicultural points of view.

Any school must address questions of our pluralistic society and facilitate a pluralism of approaches à this should be the new philosophy of school. Modern-day school should be a reflection of a pluralistic society. It is important to correct our perception of migrants away from deficit-orientation towards an awareness of a multiplicity of resources.

Another shift has to happen away from teacher knowing it all. No child is a tabula rasa. There is a "didactic triangle" between teacher – student - scientific knowledge. This relationship differs according to the persons involved. Teachers have to know about their students and to query how they can activate the potentials in an individual à they have to be familiar with different ways of learning. Circumstances have to be taken into account: All involved have to open up – an equal relationship is important. An automatic "contract" between teacher and students that involves an emotional commitment facilitates individual learning processes. It must always be possible to create a space for any questions – and also to ask questions that cannot be answered.

Teachers need intercultural competence. How can pupils be empowered to become independent – how can they be motivated to open up and be interested in their neighbour.

Teachers address topics that have not been addressed before – it is important to be able to deal with conflicts. Therefore the capacity to have empathy, to tolerate ambiguity and the potential to manage frustration etc. are some core competences a teacher must have.

School must be a place of encounter – it must reflect diversity and promote heterogeneity as “normal”. In a pluralistic school we find different individual biographies as well as collective biographies of groups. It is important to bear in mind that the “other” is not the other that we think he/she is.

Difference is a challenge – the individual is challenged to open up and leave the secure shell: This requires a school where heterogeneity is normal and where safe spaces are built.

In a culturally pluralistic school we need to cultivate our values. Tolerance without any connotation of power relations is important: We have to accept and respect otherness as equal.

School as a reflection of the society shall be a place of reciprocity – encounter is a basis for sharing ideas. All pupils are resources. Dialogue is an enriching means for exchanging experiences between individuals - both from minority and majority groups.

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The European Workshop “School Culture(s) – Values – Identities” was an exciting journey through various aspects around values education in an important part of society - school.

Robert Jackson set the theoretical basis and highlighted it with examples of his rich international research experience.

Angelos Vallianatos stimulated and supported participants in exploring diversity through the eyes of their students and facilitated a dialogue process that should take place in every school.

Kohelet exemplified a creative dialogue through music - without borders and without obstacles such as language.

Galit Hanien and Itaf Awad with their council method created a safe space for exchange of personal and also emotional issues. They also lived the example of sincere and deep dialogue in the context of political and societal boundaries.

Agneta Ucko equipped us with concrete and hands-on tools to learn to live together valuing respect, empathy, responsibility, and reconciliation – and having fun with it.

Claudia Lenz motivated participants to reflect and discuss about recommendations of the “Religions in Education” project so that religion is a source of dialogue rather than conflict.

Dudu Kücükgöl in her workshop tackled the complex topic of identity and discussed with her participants the role of teachers as managers of diversity.

Michael Weiss demonstrated how common moral topics of daily concern could be approached with students through a user-friendly and highly informative internet platform.

Gregory Kennedy-Salemi and Stuart Jolley illustrated how the conflict aspect of diversity can be tackled in creative ways inspiring students to discover their own imaginative capacities.

Chibueze Udeani concluded the seminar with his reflection on the teacher’s key role as a facilitator in the school as a pluralistic place of encounter and dialogue.

Participants said that they were leaving enriched by a lot of ideas. Some stated that their mind was opened so that they would look at their students in a different way than before and acknowledge their diversity in other ways than ethnic.

Some participants left the European Workshop with more questions than answers – and questions are the best basis for a hopefully joyful and creative process of reflection, dialogue and discovery.