Towards a Culture of Tolerance and Peace

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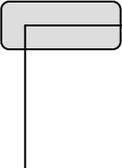
Note to our Readers

This text is part of an educational package for public secondary schools aiming at teaching schoolchildren about the culture of peace and tolerance. For more information or inquiries please contact the IBCR Programme on Children Affected by Armed Conflict, 1185 Saint-Mathieu, Montreal, Quebec H3H 2P7, Canada; tel: (+514) 932-7656 (ext. 222), fax: (+514) 932-9453, e-mail: v.atabekian@ibcr.org

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Contents

Our children are living and growing up with one of the greatest challenges societies face today, diversity. In a world where cultures increasingly converge and intermingle with each other, teaching the values and skills of 'learning to live together', has become a priority issue for education.

From a Culture of War and Conflict to a Culture of Peace and Tolerance

Human civilisation over time has created immemorial settlements of groups of people living together. We are only familiar with the last three and a half thousand years. It is interesting to note that calculations based on the surviving written historical records reveal, that out of these three and a half thousand years, only two hundred and fifty were peaceful. In other words, the history of civilisation is a history of constant warfare, destruction, conquest and violence, and not of prosperity, peace and development.

The twentieth century surpassed all the previous centuries in terms of the magnitude of violence and cruelty. Thus, the twenty-first century has put humanity into a dilemma. Either it will become an age of a culture of peace and tolerance, or it will be the last century in the history of civilisation. In the last century, the culture of war and intolerance, in all its manifestations, became one of the greatest evils for humankind. Two World Wars, more than 200 large-scale wars and armed conflicts, the violence of totalitarian and antidemocratic regimes, the struggle for power, and genocide, all a result from the culture of war, have claimed up to 300 million lives. The creation, improvement and spread of weapons of mass destruction are an indication of an increased risk of using those weapons.

The intolerant domestic political strife and social upheavals in many countries with racism, genocide, and war indicate that the spread of ideas of peace and tolerance and the

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formation of such a culture is of paramount importance for the life of every human being, family, organization, state, and society. The salvation of mankind lies in the establishment of a culture of peace and tolerance. The culture of war and intolerance takes humanity to a common grave.

Examining the history of civilization in this light, we come to the following unequivocal conclusion: humankind has to make a transition from the culture of war and violence to a culture of peace and harmony. A culture of peace must be developed as a result of this transition as a process of spiritual enrichment of every single individual and the entire society. As a result, the existing ideas of peace will become the personal moral and spiritual values of each and every individual, they will form his or her thinking and mentality, direct his or her creative forces and capabilities and all other activities. Only through this culture will it be possible to prevent the destruction of civilization, the darkness and chaos, and to achieve peace and harmony, and create conditions for the development of mankind.

Both present and future generations have the right to live in peace. We have a moral responsibility to bequeath to future generations a culture of peace and tolerance. As the UNESCO Declaration on the Responsibilities of Present Generations towards Future Generations states, "the present generation should ensure that both the present and future generations learn to live together in peace, security, respect for international law, human rights and fundamental freedoms". Moreover, the same declaration claims, "the present generation should spare future generations the scourge of war. To that end, they should avoid exposing future generations to the harmful consequences of armed conflicts as well as all other forms of aggression and use of weapons, contrary to humanitarian principles."
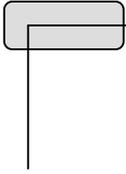
The Challenge of Multiculturalism

"The problem is that in the nearest Millennium (when exactly I cannot say, because I am not a prophet) Europe will became a multiracial continent, or, if you prefer, "colourful". If you like it – it will happen; if you do not like it – it will happen as well."

(Umberto Eco)

It is estimated that in the world there are between 3000 and 7000 various ethnic and national groups. Most of these groups aspire for some form of autonomy or recognition as an independent state. These aspirations lead to intensification of conflicts, mass migrations, and wars. Tensions between individuals, communities and states mostly stem from bias and intolerance. Intolerance is a threat to stability and peace. Modernization, economic deprivation, and weak political institutions are intertwined factors that lead to anxiety because the others are considered as "aliens."

In many conflict situations, where religion is often manipulated or exploited, identity is enhanced to sustain the unity of the group, often overused to justify erupting hostility and violence. This situation is quite evident in the following situations: between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, Tamils and Sinhalese, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, Albanians and Serbs, Armenians and Azerbaijanis, Flemish and Valloon, Vietnamese and Cambodians, Sikhs and other Indians, Israelis and Palestinians. Some ethnic groups remain at the margin of newly created states: Serbs in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albanians in Kosovo, and Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Problems of ethnic and national minorities as well as national and cultural identities did not emerge from World War II until 1989/1990. Transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy provided grounds for conflicts and struggle for revival among hostile ethnic groups, which previously lived peacefully together. Along West-East and North-South divisions are the biggest dangers to the safety of Europe and the world. Military interventions and/or international bodies' resolutions do not always bring satisfactory results. It is very important to realize that individual identity, together with awareness of group identity, is indispensable to each human being.

Many believe that their identity is forever simply because of the fact that they are born in a given country. However, identity, both group and individual, is not unchangeable. In fact, it is a process of adapting norms, which we consider important and rejecting values and norms considered as not right or outdated. There is a lack of awareness of the fact that identity formation may lead to narrowly understood loyalty to a closed set of norms and values that may lead to chauvinism, dogmatism, totalitarianism. Awareness of our identity can free us from various fears, anxieties, frustrations and feelings of being lost. Fear can also be manipulated, cause various feelings of danger or hinder rational thinking.

Human communities have a tendency to define their identities by distinguishing themselves from others. This is a natural tendency, which can have positive outcomes, such as respect for diversity as well as negative ones, such as hostility or hate. The latter happens when one group considers itself better than another, for instance claims to be chosen by God, history or fate. History shows that no group, religion, ideology or culture has a monopoly on truth, beauty and good. There is not a better, more important, truer religion or culture. There are thousands of them. There are no better nations or ethnic groups. There are many diverse nations and ethnic groups. A closer look shows that many religions and cultures have numerous common values and rules. It is also true that religions carry within themselves the seed of conflicts, deriving from one sided, dogmatic interpretations of their teaching.

Crusades, the Inquisition, holy wars, and colonial expeditions are just a few examples.

Ethnically cleansed tribes did not create Modern Europe. It was born by people's migrations through ages across the entire continent. Cultivating ethnically and culturally "clean" identities may lead to fanaticism, hate, violence and war.

In the modern world ethnic, religious, and social diversity is everywhere. On one hand, we see a tendency to connect states and nations, and create transnational entities; on the other, there is a tendency for separation of nations from previously common states. Only 10% of states out of more than 200 are mono-ethnic. In Europe, a relatively small territory was always challenged by diversity. How did people react to diversity? In the past and more recently Europeans reacted through assimilation (forced integration), as well as ethnic cleansing, and genocide. Ethnic pluralism gives liberty but does not promote integration. Civil integration, with respect to diversity, present in models of multicultural or intercultural societies seems the most desired practice.
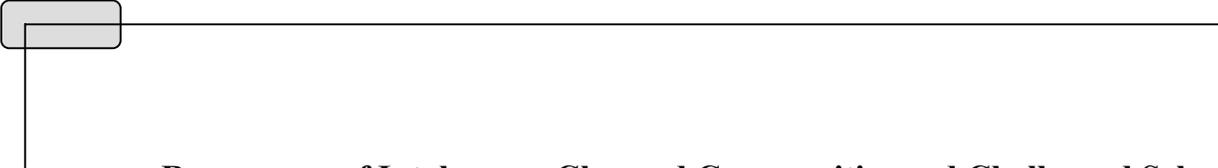
Resurgence of Intolerance Changed Communities and Challenged Schools

When the international community emerged from the decades of the Cold War, a deep sense of optimism and new hopes appeared on the horizon of the world community. Many believed that the end of this struggle was the beginning of a new era. It was hoped that the destructive consequences of that conflict and the deep divisions imposed by global economic inequalities might now be addressed and resolved once and for all for the benefit of both present and future generations.

These hopes were sorely tested, however, by the eruption of regional conflicts and the hostilities between peoples that fragmented nations and drastically changed the political map of the world as it had been for nearly half a century. All over the globe, inter-group tensions, religious hostilities, and ethnic conflicts erupted. Many long-standing conflicts previously overlooked came to world attention. Deep hatreds, some of which had previously healed through reconciliation, which permitted distinct ethnic groups to live together in peace and cooperation, surfaced in social behaviour and political movements.

These conflicts along with problems of poverty that have accelerated migration rates have increased the number of refugees seeking asylum and migrants seeking work in countries and communities that once were primarily monocultural. Multiculturalism emerged, often unanticipated, as a social condition that affected many communities, which had a major impact on their schools. Classrooms have become microcosms of the cultural diversity of global society and cross-cultural understanding has become a primary requirement of a healthy learning climate in schools around the world. This challenge is an opportunity to educate for a harmonious multiculturalism that is envisioned as the positive pluralism of a culture of tolerance and peace, referred to as a convivial community, or in the world of the distinguished Mexican educator Pablo Latapsi, 'a community of solidarity'.
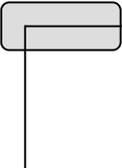
Multicultural and Intercultural Education

School is the institution where students acquire knowledge and develop attitudes. Schools should not only transmit information but also promote justice, equality and help students to challenge the many types of prejudice and discrimination present in the modern world. Does your school fulfil this purpose? In case it does, you can help to bring about changes to improve attitudes toward others, alone or with others. In case it does not yet, you can begin your own contribution, alone or with others.

Nowadays, multicultural and intercultural are popular words in the theory of education. In practice, they might cause hesitation or reluctance. Often misunderstood, they might evoke defensive mechanisms against fear of losing one's own culture, and more so - identity. The idea of borders between cultures can also be misunderstood. In our world, multiculturalism is unavoidable and can be compared to a continuum rather than a mixture of separated cultures. Such a continuum is not a melting pot but a mosaic where cultures coexist and interfere, similar to communication between individuals belonging to different and distinct cultures. The fear of loosing one's identity should be challenged. Our identities are not monolithic. When we accept various parts of ourselves, we start to accept diversity outside of us also.

Multicultural education is defined as education that recognises, accepts, values, and promotes diversity in pluralistic societies. It meets educational needs of minority children but it is not limited to that alone. It prepares all children for life in a multicultural society. Moreover, it accepts the interdependence of individual ethnic, religious, and cultural groups. It prizes individual and group heritage as valuable resources for all. It embraces elements of both surface culture (history, arts, holiday, folklore, food) and deep culture (beliefs, values, actions, concepts of time, space, taboos, myths). Intercultural education is more than appreciation of differences; it deals with everyday communication between people of different cultures. It is a part of education for international understanding along with the education for personal and national identity, education for economic and industrial understanding, education for citizenship, and education for the global environment.

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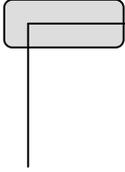
Describing Tolerance

"In the postmodern world we must all learn to live with ethno cultural diversity, rapid social change and mass migration. There is no peaceful alternative".

(A.H. Richmond)

The notion of "tolerance" is used in a number of senses and as a philosophy. As such, it is a formula of civilised coexistence of all the participants in social relations with their diverse opinions, convictions, beliefs, points of view, and other characteristics. This notion began to foster the harmonious, stable, reliable, and lasting existence of social life in all its diversity. The large communities (for instance, the states) that make up the modern world are immensely elaborate with diverse systems in terms of their ethnic, national, religious, and other characteristics where human beings are representatives of different groups. First of all, tolerance means that all individuals, as well as the groups, have equal rights. Secondly, every individual and group recognises and accepts the right of the other parties to have different opinions, thoughts, will, and behaviour. Otherwise, interpersonal and inter-group disagreements and conflicts, i.e. intolerance, will lead the society to destruction.

During the twenty-eight session of the General Conference of UNESCO, held from October 25th to November 16th, 1995, the *Declaration of Principles on Tolerance* was discussed and approved by member states. According to UNESCO's Declaration, tolerance is defined as the respect, acceptance, and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. However, tolerance is not merely a matter of recognizing and respecting the beliefs and practices of others but recognizing and respecting themselves, as an individual and as a member of the social or ethnic group or class to which they belong. This is particularly the case with

tolerance of racial and sexual differences in which the targets are often individuals as representatives of their particular ethnicity or sex.

Tolerance is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience, and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is not only a moral duty it is also a political and legal requirement. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace.

This definition clearly indicates that mutual understanding and co-operation between groups with different ethnicities, religions, political ideologies, and economic status is essential not only to communal and world peace, but also to the very survival of societies. Tolerance is the beginning, the first stage in a longer, deeper process of developing a culture of peace. It is the minimal essential quality of social relations that eliminate violence and coercion. Without tolerance, peace is not possible. With tolerance panoply of positive human and social possibilities can be pursued, including the evolution of a culture of peace and the convivial communities that comprise it.

- Tolerance is defined as the respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expressions and ways of being human
- The essence of tolerance is the right of people to behave according to their beliefs, even when there are others who disagree with that belief.
- Tolerance is not a compromise, forgiveness or encouragement of negative behaviour. In its essence, tolerance is an active attitude on the basis of recognition of the established universal human rights and freedoms. Tolerance should never be used to justify the curtailment of these fundamental values.
- Being tolerant means not to exert any pressure on anyone to change his/her beliefs, to respect opposite opinions, habits, and to be free from prejudices.
- Tolerance is broadly interpreted as the willingness of individuals to accept the right of everyone to be different. It means to respect the opinions of others without being judgmental.

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- Tolerance is a responsibility that contributes to the establishment of human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy and the rule of law. The notion of tolerance involves the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism and affirms the standards set out in international human rights instruments.

- To practice tolerance, which is equivalent to respecting the human rights, does not mean to tolerate social injustice, to reject one's own opinions or to yield to the opinions of others. Tolerance means that every human being is free to have and to insist on his or her own convictions and recognises that others have the same right.

- Tolerance means that human beings are naturally different in their appearance, posture, speech, behaviour and values, and that they have the right to live in peace and to preserve their individuality. It also means that the views of one person must not be forced upon other people.

Tolerance is not to be confused with "open-mindedness" in the sense of the word that denotes being completely neutral or permissive about all beliefs and practices whatever they are. Open-mindedness of this kind may arise because one believes every belief or practice to be as good as any other: that all beliefs and practices are of equal moral weight and value, and that none is especially justified over another. This kind of radical relativism may assume the incommensurability of all value systems that no value system can be preferred over another, or it may simply signal indifference or pessimism about all values by whoever holds them. Whichever the case, the pessimism that one cannot sustain any value system at all is a position which very few people really hold or want to hold, even those who feel every bit as uncomfortable with the notion of absolute moral truths or objective values. Such a stance would render the morality of the racist, fanatic, or rapist as acceptable or unacceptable.

This point of open-mindedness is an important one because some people seem to think that being tolerant requires one to have weak beliefs or a permissive attitude, to lack commitment to any system of values whatsoever. This attitude arises because such persons believe that thinking that others are mistaken is incompatible with being tolerant

towards them, that being tolerant actually assumes an attitude of absolute uncritical acceptance of the other or of the viewpoint of the other.

Ideas do not get implemented and become a reality automatically. One of the most important challenges for every society and the humankind is to turn the notion of tolerance into reality.

The *Declaration on Principles of Tolerance* states that it is the moral duty and legal requirement of every human being, group, and state to implement tolerance. However, stating this requirement alone is not sufficient enough to strengthen its notion. This leads to another challenge: to use education and upbringing to turn tolerance into a way of thinking, a moral value, the guiding value of all individuals and social groups, i.e. to form an individual that who has embraced the culture of tolerance.

When making decisions individuals and social groups that have embraced the culture of tolerance are always guided by the principle that "we" comes before "I." The culture of tolerance is such a complete system of moral and spiritual capabilities that it involves impeccably tolerant behaviour. Such behaviour is determined not so much by external factors (for instance, a fear that one will get prosecuted for offending a black person), but by inner moral motives. Just like a moral person is ashamed of breaking some moral norms (for instance, lying, going naked in public), a person who has embraced the culture of tolerance is ashamed of being intolerant, aggressive, or mean. For such a person, tolerance becomes a value (objective) for example, love and friendship that guide his or her personal (and therefore group) consciousness and activities.

Thus, tolerance is a virtue that makes peace possible and contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace.

Tolerance as a word was already present in ancient times, but became a problem in the XVI century due to religious wars. During that time the call for tolerance meant non-persecution for religious beliefs and practices. A tolerant political system is a

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system that does not impose upon religious communities. Laws were enacted to protected religious freedom, but tolerance is not implemented simply by laws. It refers also to attitudes, feelings and behaviours, which is where the problem begins, because tolerance is often understood as indifference. The essence of tolerance is the right of people to behave according to their beliefs, even if we do not like it. Being tolerant means not pressuring anyone to change their beliefs, respecting conflicting opinions and habits, and being free from prejudices.

Tolerance is broadly interpreted as the willingness of individuals to accept the right of everyone to be different. It means respect for the opinions of others without being judgmental. This value comes from individuals rather than the State. However, the State should take measures to ensure respect for all human beings and to encourage tolerant attitudes, because tolerance contributes to the maintenance of peace and security.

Becoming more tolerant means learning new ways of thinking, feeling and behaving. This is a difficult and deeply individual process. To grow in this process, we need help. Prejudiced attitudes and behaviours often have their source in fear, insecurity and anger, feelings, which we all share from time to time. When we recognise our feelings we can become aware of our rationalizations and then we can start to develop tolerant habits.

Philosophers, theologians, lawyers, sociologists, and psychologists define tolerance in various ways. We experience tolerance every time we are confronted with diversity. We can simply practice tolerance as acceptance of diversity of others and as taking responsibility for oneself. The acceptance of others does not mean, for instance, total acceptance of aggressive, discriminatory attitudes of others, acceptance of hate speech or violence. This is a vital problem for each human being, family, or state and is currently the subject of many debates. But here we focus on the interpersonal level in order to understand why tolerance is practiced, or not practiced. Why is it so hard to accept others, even when they are not harmful, just

different? Because they often reflect the part of us, which we do not like and do not want in ourselves. This is a mechanism difficult to bring to personal awareness for everyone.

When we feel disconnected with unwanted personal feelings, we cannot acknowledge that we project them onto others. Why is taking responsibility for our own opinions, feelings and behaviours so crucial? Because, only when we face our own negative stereotypes and prejudices can we better understand our relationships with others. The first step is to acknowledge that we have opinions and feelings towards others, and we create them, not others. Only we can produce our own feelings of nervousness, anxiety, or violence, not others. There are many reasons why we do this. Since looking at the source of our own feelings and behaviours is so hard, we tend to blame others, as if they were the reason of our irritation, anxiety, or violence. Taking responsibility for our own anger, not looking for the scapegoat, is to be tolerant. "I am angry" instead of "he/she made me angry." This seems to be very simple and yet so hard in everyday practice.

Exercise

- **Describe an event when you were wrong in your opinion about someone else.**
- **What was the basis of your first opinion?**
- **What caused you to discover your mistake?**
- **How did you feel?**

The purpose of this exercise is to acknowledge that we may misjudge others and others may misjudge us. What is vital is to go further and question our opinions, let people know us and let ourselves know others.

It will be easier to take responsibility for all our feelings when we accept that there are no good or bad feelings, there are only good or bad expressions of these feelings, and good or bad reactions caused by these emotions. Sometimes our opinions are wrong. However, we cannot challenge them if we are afraid to have contact with other people.

TRY TO TALK TO PEOPLE OF OTHER RELIGIONS, ETHNIC AND CULTURAL GROUPS, IMMIGRANTS, AND ASYLUM SEEKERS.

TRY TO CELEBRATE RELIGIOUS FEASTS IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD, TOGETHER WITH MEMBERS OF OTHER RELIGIONS.
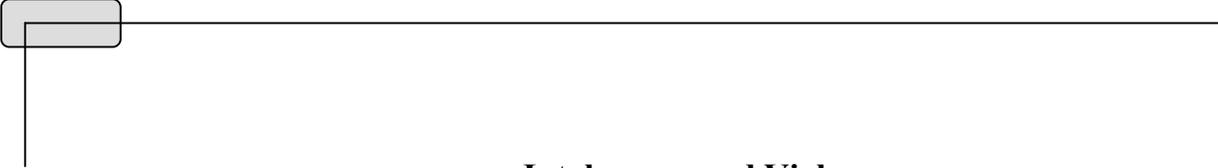
Intolerance and Violence

"What differs from each other is in accordance; harmony consists of conflict of contradictions, for instance lyre and bow".
(Heraclitus)

On the one hand, intolerance has a constructive and positive influence. Being tolerant does not mean to tolerate and accept absolutely everything. Unprincipled toleration of everything can lead to the corrosion of the societies foundation. For instance, a state must not tolerate and fail to bring to justice those who perpetrate premeditated murders or terrorists. On the other hand, intolerance plays a corroding and anti-social role, because it leads to the worsening of the moral and psychological climate in the society, which in turn leads to violence and victims. For example, the spread of racist ideology as one of the manifestations of intolerance fosters an increase in racial violence and killings. Therefore, intolerance can sometimes be built upon false inhuman values. It is this type

of intolerance that threatens the existence of a human society. Some severe forms of intolerance are sexism, racism, aggressive nationalism, xenophobia, exploitation, religious fanaticism, and political repression. Why? because they become a pretext for starting offensive actions. Subsequently, the danger is essentially that the people or groups of people, who are characterised by intolerance based on false or distorted values, are always prepared to insult, oppress and attack those they do not like. Intolerance is the first precondition for resorting to attacks and conflicts, wars, and violence.

In the most general terms, intolerance can be defined as a negative, rejecting position or attitude towards another person or a group of people. Intolerance derives from the belief that one's own group; belief system or way of life is superior to those of others. It can produce a range of consequences from simple lack of civility or ignoring others, through elaborate social systems such as apartheid, or the intentional destruction of a people in the perpetuation of genocide. All such actions originate in the denial of the fundamental worth of the person. Consequently, **the overriding goal of education of tolerance is an appreciation of and respect for the human dignity and integrity of all persons.** This is the core value of all human-rights theory and international standards. It is the principal motivation behind efforts to achieve peace and the inspiration for democratic form of government; it is the antithesis of intolerance. The three monotheistic religions, namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam support and defend the concept of dignity of the person.

Intolerance is a symptom that carries the potential of a life-threatening social illness – violence. Policy makers, educators, indeed all citizens, need to recognise the symptoms or indicators of intolerance and to take appropriate action. Curative policies and actions must be designed and undertaken immediately when the symptoms appear. Intolerance must be confronted if violence is to be avoided.

Intolerance is often described as the unwillingness to accept the right of people to deviate from the dominant culture. It stems from a lack of respect for others. It often starts with a linguistic reduction of a person to a function, an opinion defining a human being in terms of race, colour, gender or religion.

Among the causes of intolerance are prejudice, feelings of superiority, and the need to find a scapegoat to blame for social or economic ills.

In order to build global peace it is crucial first to build peace inside of us, to face our own prejudices and then to build justice, deeper respect for diverse persons and compassion for those who are outside our immediate surroundings.

Negative intolerance, which is an element of the culture of war and which rejects the culture of peace, manifests itself in ignoring a person or a group of people and forming an extremely unfavourable opinion of them. We show our intolerance every time we say we don't like someone. In other words, an intolerant person is the one who is usually prepared to give a negative assessment (with words or in any other way) to other people, to show animosity towards them on whatever grounds.

As a psychological point of view (the conviction of superiority), intolerance in heterogeneous, multiethnic, multi-religious, and multicultural societies can produce a range of negative consequences: lack of civility, contempt and animosity towards other people, violations of human rights, violence, and armed clashes. It is a horrible occurrence when intolerance penetrates into the area of politics and government, which could result in widespread violence, racial discrimination, and genocide. In all of the above-mentioned cases, the idea of the fundamental value of the individual is denied.

Violence is a social disease caused by intolerance. It takes joint efforts to protect the society and social well being from this "disease." In these circumstances, in addition to a long and comprehensive study of peace, human rights, and democracy (which is perhaps the most efficient way of fighting this phenomenon), it is necessary to make every effort to recognise the early "symptoms" of intolerance and to take appropriate actions. Policy makers, educators and generally all citizens must be able to recognise the "symptoms" of

intolerance and to take appropriate actions. Preventive policies should be designed and implemented immediately when the "symptoms" appear. In order to build global peace, it is crucial first to build peace within us, to stay away from prejudices and then to build justice, a climate of deep respect for diverse individuals, compassion for those who are outside our immediate surroundings.

Exercise

- **Describe someone you really do not like: his/her personality, behaviour and appearance.**
- **What do you dislike the most about this person?**
- **And now describe yourself as a person who really does not like someone.**
- **What do you look like?**
- **How do you express yourself?**
- **How do you feel?**

This exercise allows us to distance ourselves from our emotions when we encounter negative feelings towards others. Distance makes us more aware of our behaviour when we experience negative feelings.

DO NOT TOLERATE DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE WHEN YOU DISCUSS OR HEAR DISCUSSIONS RELATED TO ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS OR CULTURAL MINORITIES, REFUGEES, IMMIGRANTS.

EXAMINE YOUR OWN BIASES AND WORK TO OVERCOME THEM.

SPEAK OUT AGAINST HATE AND INJUSTICE.

SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE FOR YOUR FAMIILY AND FRIENDS.
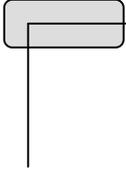
<u>Tolerance and Human Rights</u>

Tolerance is essential to the awareness of human rights and the achievement of peace Fundamentally, tolerance is the right to have their persons and identities respected. Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy, and the rule of the law. It involves the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism, and affirms the standards set out in international human rights instruments.

The modern political and social values from which the current international standards of human rights have evolved were first articulated in a call for tolerance as fundamental to the maintenance of social order. The Western political philosophers articulated the necessity of tolerance to a society that could no longer tolerate the intolerance and strife of the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The recognition of tolerance as a fundamental component of peace among nations was a significant part of the historical climate that lead to the emergence of the first modern declaration of rights that culminated three centuries later in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It has become apparent that much of the inter-group strife enflamed by intolerance derives from peoples' insistence on the rights to determine their own political, social and economic affairs. As the Universal Declaration points out, violence can be the consequence of the repression of democratic aspirations, just as it can be the result of intolerance. A major function of democracy is to facilitate political change and mediate political differences without violence. Thus, the element of democracy becomes essentially interlocked with peace, human rights, and tolerance.

The achievement of these four values in the world society would constitute the basis of a 'culture of peace'. Any culture is fundamentally the result of learning. A culture of peace thus requires an education planned and guided by the values of peace, human rights, democracy, and at its very core, tolerance.

Tolerance Enshrined in {PRIVATE }International Instruments

Intolerance has left its negative traces throughout the history of civilization. The idea of tolerance historically matured and developed in Europe, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Destructive religious wars and constant social upheavals led the Europeans of that time to believe that the disruption of religious unity was inevitable. It is necessary to be tolerant towards other religions to establish public order. The leading thinkers of that time (John Lock, Voltaire and others) dedicated whole works to the idea of tolerance. In their works, they regarded tolerance a human virtue. This virtue includes the tolerance towards differences between the people, the ability to live without disturbing the others, the ability to have rights and freedoms without violating the rights and freedoms of others.

Right from the beginning tolerance was regarded as a philosophy of diversity and endurance of humankind. Any society without ethnic, social, and cultural homogeneity needs tolerance. Consequently, a tolerant attitude towards social and cultural differences, towards the opinions, beliefs, and behaviours of others is one of the fundamental principles of world civilisation. In addition to a philosophic understanding of tolerance and the need for it, one of the urgent challenges for humanity is to turn it into a way of thinking for every individual, social group, ethnic group, and political force. The awareness of this challenge led to the fact that the idea of tolerance penetrated into the area of international law and was enshrined in international instruments. This penetration is the first stage in the process of replacing the culture of war and intolerance with a culture of peace and tolerance.

The first steps toward the inclusion of the idea of tolerance in international legal instruments were already taken at the end of the nineteenth century. Therefore, the 1894 Geneva Convention required to show respect for every soldier's person and to recognise

the neutrality of medical personnel in times of war. This idea culminated in the development of rules for treating prisoners of war and the establishment of the International Committee of Red Cross. The League of Nations also became involved in establishing ideas of tolerance. In 1926, the League passed a document proclaiming slavery to be illegal.

The idea of tolerance became urgent immediately after the end of the Second World War and it prompted a need for a new culture of politics, philosophy, and functioning. The UN and its other organizations put the universal ideas, including tolerance, at the basis of their activities. The seemingly utopian ideas of legal equality, respect for human rights, and tolerance gradually established them in the law and started to be applied in practice.

The UN Charter sets forth the determination of the United Nations to keep the future generations away from the destruction of wars, to re-establish the faith in the fundamental human rights, the dignity, and value of an individual, to practice tolerance and to live together in peace as good neighbours.

The Preamble of the UNESCO Charter adopted in 1945 endorses that "the world must be based on intellectual and moral accord between people."

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) proclaims: "Every individual has the right to the freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and convictions and the right to express them freely." According to the Declaration, education must be aimed at full development of a person and at strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It must foster mutual understanding, tolerance and friendship between nations and racial or religious groups.

In addition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, numerous other well-known international agreements on human rights have been adopted in the past few years. They either set forth the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of an individual or are aimed at prohibiting or eliminating intolerance and various manifestations of

discrimination. If we take into consideration that more than half a century has elapsed since the Second World War and no disaster of such nature and proportions has taken place ever since, we can say that this is the result of the influence of the international agreements mentioned above. Nevertheless, the situation is not satisfactory; despite all the efforts, intolerance and discrimination continue to produce destructive results. Both in the Cold War years and after, there have been social, religious, cultural, and inter-civilisation confrontations as well as conflicts in the world. They have often turned into armed conflicts. Intolerance, in its numerous manifestations, continues to remain a threat to peace, democracy, and human rights. National and international relations continue to remain an obstacle for development.

The Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations endorses a provision, which reflects the determination of member states to practice tolerance and to live together in peace as good neighbours. The inclusion of this provision in the Charter is not accidental. After the experience of the extreme nationalism of the nineteenth century and the horrors of the Second World War, the prevention of intolerance, discrimination, and racism was seen as essential for maintaining peace. It became the next stage of development of human rights. A new framework for international cooperation was established. Recognition of the principle of tolerance was of paramount importance for the effective protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Learning how to live constructively in a diverse world became vital and working to resolve conflict through mutual agreement became crucial. Hence, the search for peace through education in accordance with the principles set forth in the UN Charter began.

Basic human rights instruments providing general protection of human rights and consequently dealing with the subject of tolerance are the following:

- Charter of the United Nations (1945) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which proclaimed non-discrimination declarations,
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted in 1948, and

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), which set a framework of international law treaties.

Among the instruments addressing the subject of tolerance and providing particular forms of protection are the following:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), applying the principle of equality and non-discrimination to every person,

- Declaration of the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971),

- Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice, presenting a set of universal principles, prepared and adopted by UNESCO in 1978,

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979),

- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981), stating that no one shall be subject to discrimination on the grounds of religion or other belief,

- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), with non-discrimination as an important principle, and

- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990), repeating the range of existing rights covered by the Covenants.

Among the Organization on Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) documents particularly dealing with freedom of religion and belief are:

- The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe (Helsinki, 1975),

- The Concluding Document of the Madrid Meeting of Representatives of the Participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe (1983),

- The Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting of Representatives of the Participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe (1989),

- The Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of Representatives of the Participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe (1990),

- The Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990),

- The Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe (1991),

- The Budapest Document toward a Genuine Partnership in a New Era (1994),

- The Charter for European Security (Istanbul, 1999).

Among Council of Europe documents are:

- The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950),

- The Protocol no.1 tot he European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1952),

- The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995).

Among European Union documents are:

- The Treaty Establishing the European Community (1997),

- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000).

Despite the implementation of various international and domestic instruments, intolerance and discrimination still occur in various parts of the world. Since the Second World War various forms of religious, racial, and ethnic intolerance have appeared among school-age children in many countries.
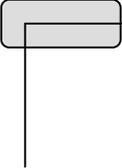
Indicators of Intolerance

In planning curative policies and actions for tolerance the degree and type of intolerance that may be present in the environment in question must be identified and assessed. The following can be regarded as "symptoms" or indicators of intolerance:

Language: Denigrations and pejorative or exclusive language that devalues, demeans, and dehumanises cultural, racial, national or sexual groups.
Stereotyping: Describing all members of a group as characterized by the same attributes, usually negative.
Teasing: Calling attention to particular human behaviour patterns, attributes and characteristics so as to ridicule or insult.
Prejudice: Judgment on the basis of negative generalizations and stereotypes rather than on the actual facts of a case or specific behaviour of an individual.
Scapegoating: Blaming traumatic events or social problems on a particular group.
Discrimination: Exclusion from social benefits and activities on primarily prejudicial grounds.
Ostracism: Behaving as if the others were not present or did not exist. Refusal to -speak to or acknowledge others or their culture.
Harassment: Deliberate behaviour to intimidate and degrade others, often intended as a means of forcing them out of the community, organization or group.
Bullying: Use of superior physical capacity or greater numbers to humiliate others, deprives them of priority or status, or forces them into particular actions.
Expulsion: Officially or forcefully expelling or denying right of entrance or presence in a place, social group, profession or any place where group activity occurs, including those upon which survival depends, such as places of employment or shelter, etc.

Exclusion: Denying possibilities to meet fundamental needs and /or participate fully in the society, as in particular communal activities.
Segregation: Enforced separation of people of different races, religions or gender, usually to the disadvantage of one group.
Repression: Forceful prevention of enjoyment of human rights.

These indicators also include the desecration or destruction of cultural and religious symbols and structures that belong or are of a special value to diverse racial, national and cultural groups. Forcefully depriving the people who belong to those groups of their property, forcing them into particular actions, denying them the right to participate in society, actually expelling them from society or isolating them, limiting or denying the rights of persons who belong to those groups, subjecting them to violence, all the way to their physical destruction.

Intolerance can be divided into the following categories depending on the nature and peculiarities of the social subjects practiced:

- Interpersonal: i.e. intolerant behaviour between two schoolchildren;
- Between a person and a social group. For instance: when one person in the class is opposed to the rest of the class and vice versa;
- Inter-group, i.e. between different social groups. Social groups can be large or small, such as school classes, political parties, as well as groups of the rich and the poor (social and financial classes), women and men, ethnic groups (nations and peoples), races, civilisations, etc. For example, large civilisations (Western and Oriental, Christian and Muslim civilisations, etc.) that have been developing for thousands of years will still last for a long time. Therefore, despite the differences between them, they must necessarily coexist. In the modern world, it is necessary to prevent the attempts of any civilisation to take over the others, as well as any civilisation's convictions that its principles and values are the only true ones. No civilisation in the world is superior to any other. There are certain principles, views, or religious beliefs in a civilisation that are acceptable to those born into them but not for other civilisations;

- Inter-country, when the climate of intolerance exists between individual countries or between two different groups of countries.

Depending on the area of a person's activities, intolerance can appear in a family, in everyday life, in work relations, as well as in political-governmental, cultural, religious, and many other areas. For example, in the area ofpolitical-governmental, when the state is intolerant and discriminates against its own citizens who disagree with the views or policies of the ruling elite, or when individual political groups and parties within that state engage in a militaristic and belligerent struggle when the political majority has a negative attitude towards the minority and violently forces its opinion on the latter.
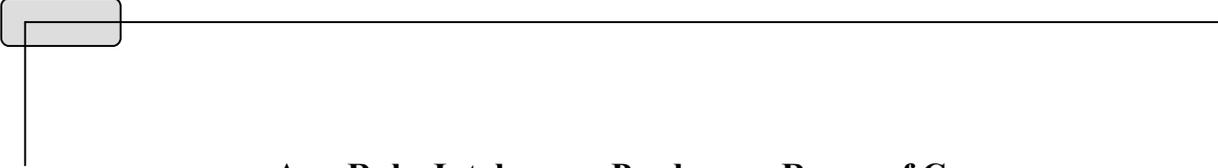
## As a Rule, Intolerance Produces a Range of Consequences:

- ***Discrimination*** is the curtailment or denial of rights to certain individuals, organizations or states on the basis of their race, nationality, sex, citizenship, as well as their property status, political, and religious affiliation. Therefore, one of the common forms of political discrimination is the denial of the right to vote. Racial discrimination is much more common.

- ***Racial discrimination*** is the curtailment or denial of human rights on the basis of race. Forms of racial discrimination include apartheid, segregation, etc.

- ***Apartheid*** is the policy of racial discrimination and segregation aimed at establishing the supremacy of one racial group over another that is oppressed and exploited.

- *Segregation* is one of the extreme forms of racial discrimination, when the black population, or people with other skin colour, are separated from the white people. It is practiced in all areas of public life simultaneously by creating separate institutions or divisions for the blacks and the whites. For instance, a café or a restaurant is designated for whites only. Restrictions are made on the choice of residence.

- *Sexual discrimination* manifests itself in limiting the rights of women as compared to men, prohibiting or limiting women's participation in public life and in government.

- *Aggressive nationalism* includes the superiority and domination of certain nations over others.

- *Forced assimilation* is a special policy conducted by the dominant nation aimed at assimilating any other ethnic group. As a result, the latter ceases to exist or loses its national peculiarities.

- *Genocide* is comprised of actions, the purpose of which is total or partial annihilation of any national, racial, ethnic or religious group (murder of members of such groups, infliction of serious bodily or mental harm on such persons, prevention of childbirth, etc.)

- *Anti-Semitism* is defined as the expression of animosity towards Jewish people.

- *Xenophobia* is defined as the hatred and fear of foreigners (strangers). In many ethnic groups, the hatred of "strangers" is instilled since childhood. For instance, there is a saying in Arabic that goes like this: "I am against my brother; my brother and I are against our cousin. We, my brother, my cousin and I, are against all strangers." Strangers are always seen as possessing negative characteristics and are considered a source of danger. Nations and ethnic groups that suffer from

xenophobia can resort to any form or method of action towards the foreigners that would be unacceptable for their own people. Those subjected to xenophobia are devoid of their natural rights, and no moral or legal requirements apply to them.

- *Marginalization* is defined as actions that result in a person or a certain group of people or an ethnic group being forcefully cut off and alienated from their traditional ethnic, national, religious, moral and political values, or being unable to accept and adapt to the values of the surrounding "foreign" culture. Marginalization results in the feeling of alienation and increased aggressiveness in those people or among the social group, which is potentially very dangerous for the society.

- *Fascism* is defined as the rejection of democratic freedoms, the denial of pluralism and diversity, as well as the institution of general control over individuals.

- *Religious fanaticism* is the imposition of a particular religion and related rites by forcing all members of the society to participate in them, the establishment of religious discrimination, etc. Numerous wars have taken place during the Middle Ages because of religious intolerance. Today, some religions or religious sects still have a belligerent attitude towards other faiths or sects.

- *Political oppression* involves the ban on open and free discussion and dissemination of political ideas, impossibility of free and fair elections, limitations on the freedom of speech, prosecution for political dissent.

- *Exploitation* means unfair compensation for work, as well as unreasonable and ruthless consumption of natural resources.

- *Imperialism* involves the subjugation of one or several peoples to imperialistic powers with the aim of controlling the wealth and natural resources of the

dependent or colonised people or peoples. Economic domination is accompanied by the full power of the imperialistic powers in political, ideological, information, and other areas of public life. The economic and power monopolies of imperialist states result in the violation of the principle of the equality of countries and the establishment of conditions for the dominant powers to live at the expense of all others. Alliances are formed on the international arena through the unification of representatives of "their own kind."
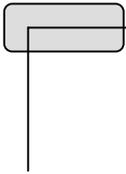
Some further Details of Intolerant Attitude

1. Stereotype

"The ancestor of every action is a thought".
(Ralh Waldo Emerson)

Prejudices are nourished by negative stereotypes of individuals or groups of people. The word "stereotype" is derived from the Greek words *stereós:* solid, hard, petrified, and *týpos:* pattern, mould. Walter Lippman, an American journalist, introduced the concept of stereotype to social science in 1922 in his often quoted work "Public Opinion". He assumed that stereotypes, "pictures in our heads," at least partially, are culturally determined phenomena and are necessary to simplify a complex reality. Stereotypes are overgeneralizations (often erroneous and oversimplifying) about reality, other people, based on assumptions and misinformation rather than on facts. Stereotypes do not take under consideration enormous varieties of human diversity belonging to a given group. They do not consider either current circumstance, which surround individuals. What is worse, stereotypes can lead to prejudices and discriminatory behaviours.

Stereotypes can become so ingrained that people accept them without question. Social stereotypes blind people to individual differences so they ignore each person's uniqueness. They are sets of convictions associated with a group, generalized to all its members.

We learn stereotyping as children listen to the comments of parents, teachers, and our peers absorbing their opinions, observing their behaviours, watching TV, listening to music, reading textbooks and comics. Stereotyping makes life easier because it does not require an independent thought process. It makes the world seem simpler so we can feel safer.

Since the sixties there have been tendencies to treat stereotypes as normal processes of categorization, with emphasis on arbitrary characteristics of some social categories. Stereotypes as any other categories are stored in our long-term memory as cognitive representations called schemata. We activate them automatically being unaware and with little effort. There is no pathology in stereotyping, but the content of stereotypes may be pathogenic.

Traditionally stereotypes were perceived as particularly rigid and resistant to change. Not all researchers nowadays share this view. They serve also various functions: oversimplify complex reality and allow categorizing when information is limited.

Main functions of stereotypes are: adjusting (supplying the feeling of cognitive control in social situations), defensive and reducing fear (improving self-esteem, especially when positive self-stereotype is confronted with a negative hetero-stereotype), indicative of distinctions between dominant groups and the minority group, strengthening in-group value against taking "foreign" values, channelling aggression and justifying attack on others, assuring foreseeing human behaviour, communicative, manipulative, political, and propaganda.

The less information we have about a person, the more likely we are to respond to him or her in terms of stereotypes. The stereotypes of various ethnic, cultural, or

religious groups are widely known to members of a society, and may often affect behaviour.

<u>What can we do to reduce stereotypes in our lives?</u>

1. Focus on every person as an individual.

2. Become more aware of stereotypes and how they interfere with our ability to perceive and interact with people.

3. Remember that there are more differences within a group than between groups.

4. Recognise that we are all part of many groups, none of which can totally explain or define who we are.

5. Learn to look at things from another person's point of view.

6. Be willing to learn more about the culture and background of people different from yourselves[i].

TAKE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET PEOPLE FROM ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL MINORITIES OR ASYLUM SEEKERS.

2. Prejudice

> *"A great many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices".*
> (William James)

There can be no war without prejudice. Often colour, race, and religion are partial causes of prejudice. The word "prejudice" comes from the Latin words *prae*: before, and *judicum:* judgement. The term prejudice is often used synonymously with 'bias', and it is defined as a negative, emotional attitude toward certain groups and their members based on inaccurate stereotypes. Prejudices give the feeling of controlling reality. Since they allow describing the world in a supposedly consistent way, they fulfil the feeling of security. When we think of others we should realize that we do not react to reality, but to our image of reality.

Prejudice is defined as a negative attitude, emotion or behaviour towards members of a group on account of their membership of that group. Some researchers believe that personality factors are crucial in determining prejudice, some see situational and socio-economic factors as a determinant factor. Prejudiced attitudes, manifested most frequently within ethnic and gender groups, can be already found among very small children.

People have the tendency to categorize the world and underline differences between various categories and diminish differences within a category. The categorization process causes stereotyping. When groups have conflicting goals and are in competition, it may also lead to prejudice. Many attitudes toward others depend upon one's childhood guidance, as well as attitudes moulded by parents, teachers, media, and social environment.

Exercise

We all categorize people. List types of people (not concrete persons) whom you would divide into the following categories:
- **People who get on our nerves,**
- **People whom you avoid,**
- **People you are afraid of because of their behaviour.**

This exercise allows us to see how easily we put people we are afraid of into certain categories. Categories are convenient. They save us time in processing information.

Prejudices may cause extermination of millions of people. Prejudices influence our economics, our politics, and the behaviour of man toward man, nation toward nation, and countries toward countries. The Old Testament teaches to "Love thy neighbour as thy self," and this means no prejudice. The Buddhists teach to "Treat thy brother as thy self" but other religions teach that they are the only one offering salvation.

Prejudiced ideas and attitudes are acquired. People with feelings of superiority often feel jealous or inferior toward others. Frustrations, rejections and jealousies motivate prejudices.

Exercise

All, together with the teacher, stand on one side of the classroom. The teacher will call out various categories of people. Those who identify with a given category go to the other side of the room. Participation in this exercise is voluntary.

The teacher says to the students: "See how you feel when you go to the other side of the room". See how you walk.
- **What is going on with you when you walk to the other side?**
- **If you did not go, think why?**
- **See who is with you? Who is not with you?**
- **Who is missing?**
- **Do not comment**

Examples:

On the other side of the classroom separate in groups: all boys, all girls, tolerant, discriminated, Catholics, Muslims, lonely, popular, shy, etc.

Students can invent their own categories. It is important not to talk during this exercise, but share experiences afterwards (for those who need it).

The main purpose of this exercise is to experience that we belong to many different groups; we share elements of our identity with those from other groups.

Many individuals and groups are rejected because of prejudice; and rejected people become prejudiced against those who have done the rejecting. Rejection begets rejection. Superiority is overcompensation for inferiority. Some prejudices are defences against one's own feelings of inferiority or inadequacy, jealousy, misinformation about others, rejections of others feelings of insecurity because of imaginary or real threats, identification with an enemy or enemies against one or more people, or having been rejected or frustrated by a person. Can we wipe out prejudice? No! But we can limit many serious prejudices through law, training, and education.

Exercise

Write down characteristics of each of the following groups:

- **Fat people,**
- **Jews,**
- **Homosexuals,**
- **The rich,**
- **Men,**
- **Women,**
- **Teachers**

The purpose of this exercise it to experience that the negative stereotypes we hear or see, coming from parents, friends, colleagues, and teachers are often stored in our subconscious. In some circumstances our behaviour can be influenced by feelings of hurt or frustration as a result of being treated with injustice. This exercise may also make us aware of internalised negative stereotypes about our own group.

QUESTION WHAT YOU ARE EXPOSED TO.

RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE'S RIGHTS.

DO NOT BLINDLY FOLLOW CONSENSUAL REALITY.

REJECT THE PRACTISE OF BLAMING OTHERS.

PRACTICE THE VALUES OF CHOICE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

Beginning with Allport's book *The Nature of Prejudice* published in 1954, academics have done many studies and experiments to determine the reasons for intolerance. Many results support Allport's main idea: We are all born with the potential for tolerance or intolerance. Whether we become tolerant or intolerant depends to a great extent on how we are treated in our families.

Prejudiced people are prejudiced in similar ways. They share certain common features:

- They generally are afraid of failure;
- They are not able to deal with changing situations and with frustration;
- They lack self-awareness;
- They do not know that they are the primary victims of self-intolerance;
- They have low self-esteem. To have any self-esteem at all, they have to consider themselves stronger, smarter, or better in some other way than those around them;
- They lack trust in themselves and in other people;
- Not feeling safe, and not being able to deal with ambiguities, they construct a world-view and a vision of themselves that masks their real feelings and gives them a false sense of belonging;
- Some need to hate in the same way that others need to abuse painkilling medicines;
- Some became addicted to hate and to the hate-object;
- For some of them the level of their hate towards the group picked for scapegoating reflects the intensity of their unconscious self-hate.

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Prejudices are a convenient screen on which they can project topics and interpretations important to them. Among features of prejudices are the lack of consistency and the allowance to describe the world supposedly in a consistent way. Prejudices give feelings of controlling reality, fulfil feelings of security, are economical, and therefore make acting and thinking easy. They serve a communicative function, may influence and create reality. Another factor determining their durability is that dominant groups benefit from prejudices and the stigmas attached to subordinate groups are deep in our subconscious. Experimental studies bring pessimistic outcomes, in reference to control the propagation of prejudice and negative stereotypes, confirming that they are activated automatically, influencing behaviour of the object and subject of an interaction.

Next, prejudices fulfil people's need for consistency. One more factor is crucial for understanding inter-group dynamics, that members of the subordinate groups have been socialized by the value system of the dominant group. They grow up believing that their group is inferior. All prejudices involve distance.

We all have prejudices but, unless we are aware of them, we are not likely to be able to help others to overcome their prejudices. For some people, reluctance to explore our own prejudices often comes from fear that we will not be able to control the anger and guilt accompanying this process. For others it may come from a memory of being hurt and discriminated against. Emotional deprivation, in other words, lack of fulfilment of basic and emotional needs, may nourish prejudiced attitudes.

Prejudices can be self-fulfilling. Belief that a person has certain characteristics or attitudes may itself lead to "evidence" of that belief. Prejudices are in part a reflection of norms. They remain relatively stable as long as norms remain stable.

Exercise

Complete these sentences below: compare the sentences and discuss with a classmate. Whenever they contain prejudices, and in case they do, which factors could cause it (TV, newspapers, friends, attitudes of parents)?

- **People on welfare are....**
- **In our country ....are..........**
- **All politicians are...........**
- **When I meet ....**
- **All people with AIDS are...........**
- **I dislike ....whom...........**
- **All homosexuals are.............**

DISCUSS WITH YOUR TEACHER THE ORIGINS AND DYNAMIC OF PREJUDICES.
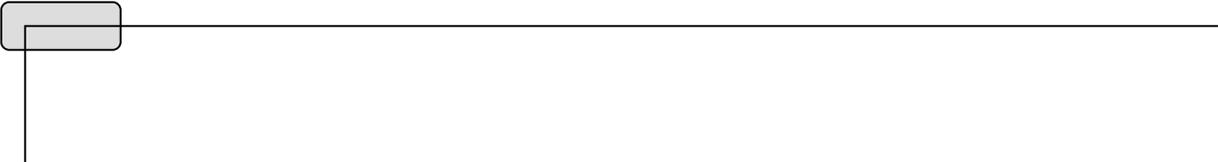
What Helps to Overcome Negative Stereotypes and Prejudices?

There are several factors in challenging our own bias and that of others. Among them are:

- Changing social climate such that prejudice becomes contrary to norms,
- Adoption of tolerant child-rearing practices,
- Contact between members of different groups; provided that certain conditions are met: equal status of groups, support from authority, i.e. teacher, the contact is intimate and pleasant; cooperation between members of particular groups,
- Setting examples of positive attitudes toward other groups and tolerance in mass media,

- Learning about our own religious and cultural heritage,

- Learning about other religious, cultural heritage, history, and customs,

- Acknowledging differences and similarities, among and between individuals and groups,

- Revealing the uniqueness of each individual,

- Building awareness of diversity, ancestry, traits, and customs that other ethnic, religious or cultural groups have,

- Enhancing self-esteem and self-security to become confident about ourselves,

- Developing critical thinking skills in order to distinguish between reality and fiction, fact and opinion,

- Understanding that overgeneralizations may lead to negative stereotypes,

- Building empathy toward victims of prejudice through direct experience,

- Examining our own and other people's behaviour toward others,

- Interacting with peers who differ from us.

3. Xenophobia

> *"We are born helpless. As soon as we are*
> *Fully conscious we discover loneliness.*
> *We need others physically, emotionally, intellectually;*
> *We need them if we are to know anything,*
> *even ourselves".*
> (C.S. Lewis*)*

Such phenomena as: "xenophobia," "prejudice," "intolerance," "ethnocentrism," and even "nationalism" overlap in their manifestations and, often, partially in theoretical considerations. What bridge them are positive attitudes toward our own group and negative ones toward strangers. Xenophobia literally means fear of strangers, from the Greek word *xenos:* strange and *phobia:* a fear or aversion. It is a form of prejudice that is the fear of strangers or outsiders. This term has been applied recently mainly in the context of attacks on immigrants and asylum seekers in

Western Europe. When ideology or power relations are involved then xenophobia, seen as a universal phenomenon, and ethnocentrism, characteristic of all groups, become racist, the last step of ethnic attitudes.

TRY TO INTERVENE WHEN YOU HEAR XENOPHOBIC JOKES OR INSULTING WORDS ABOUT ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS, AND CULTURAL MINORITIES.

SPEAK AGAINST XENOPHOBIC ACTIONS.

4. Nationalism

The term was formulated after the French Revolution. Nationalism is an ideology that the world is naturally divided into distinct groups. It argues that each group of people has a set of characteristics, which identify it as a "nation." It also maintains that these groups should be able to create institutions and laws to determine their own future. Political movements and strategies emerging from this ideology, since the nineteenth century, had a major influence on the way in which the world is organized politically.

5. Ethnocentrism

The term "ethnocentrism" was introduced by William Graham Sumner in "Folkways" (1906), who describes ethnocentrism as an attitude in which our own group values are taken as basis for other groups' descriptions. As he wrote, ethnocentrism is "a view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it". The term contains two Greek words: *ethnos*: nation and *kentron*: centre.

In the authoritarian personality theory of Adorno et al. (1950), ethnocentrism is one of the major symptoms. Therefore, it is a feature of only some people, not a universal phenomenon. The term "authoritarianism" includes such traits as: intolerance of ambiguity, conservatism, and projectivity. It is strictly related to childhood experiences and claimed to be a predictor of ethnocentrism, anti-Semitism, and racism. Ethnocentrism is a mechanism by which people can achieve a positive self-image by identifying themselves with their own group, perceived as better, and by regarding other groups as inferior. This mechanism is applied to all groups in general.

Some researchers want to see ethnocentrism as our innate characteristic (among the arguments is a fear of strangers in infants). Anthropological theory of ethnocentrism explains ethnocentric tendency to treat one's own culture as morally superior compared to other cultures, a tendency to value other cultures according to one's own standards, a tendency to perceive other cultures as deviated, not taking into consideration the existence of differences. Homogenous, traditional, and isolated societies not having contacts with diversity, according to this approach, tend to evaluate and judge others in terms of good and bad.

Other sets of theories focus on struggles for power or material goods between different ethnic groups and on conflicting interests.

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT:

- WHEN PEOPLE TALK ABOUT OTHER CULTURES THEY TEND TO DESCRIBE THE DIFFERENCES, NOT SIMILARITIES

- WHAT SEEMS IMPORTANT AND REASONABLE TO A PERSON IN ONE CULTURE MAY SEEM IRRATIONAL AND UNIMPORTANT TO AN OUTSIDER

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6. Anti-Semitism

> *"Ultimately, whoever hates, hates his brother.*
> *And when he hates his brother, he hates himself".*
> (Elie Wiesel)

Anti-Semitism has been known for more than two thousand years. The term "anti-Semitism," introduced in 1879 by the German writer Wilhelm Marr, is clear to Jews but very complex for scholars. Some descriptions divide anti-Semitism into economic, racial, social, and theological dimensions. Modern anti-Semitism, in contrast to earlier forms, was based not on religious practices of the Jews but on the theory that Jews are an inferior race.

There can be various ways of interpreting racism. If the Jews are discriminated against as a race, anti-Semitism should be treated as a manifestation of racism. Whereas in the United States, racism can be interpreted as related to skin colour, the historical connotation of the term "anti-Semitism" should be kept in mind also. The concept of the Jews as a race was present in the Nazis' rhetoric, and it led to the almost total annihilation of European Jewry.

Currently anti-Semitism is studied together with nationalism, social distance, ethnocentrism, ethnic stereotype, and prejudice. Anti-Semitism is studied also in terms of the Holocaust and also as an indicator of frustration, anxiety, and hopelessness in society, typical of transition periods. The main component of anti-Semitism nowadays is an idea of a collective, conspiring enemy.

Exercise

Share your own personal experience related to racism, anti-Semitism or another form of prejudice or discrimination. If you do not feel free to talk about your own personal experience, talk about prejudices of your colleagues or about attitudes full of prejudices, which you have seen on TV or in a movie.

TRY TO INTERVENE WHEN YOU HEAR ANTI-SEMITIC, ANTI-ISLAMIC OR RACIST JOKES OR STORIES.

7. Discrimination

The concept of discrimination is often referred to as intolerance. It is widely understood as an impact of prejudice on our behaviour or behavioural intentions to exclude a group or its members from certain domains in society. As studies have shown, the relationship between prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour is not consistent. There are claims among researchers that discrimination towards target groups has decreased due to three main factors: First, members of the target groups had to advocate for themselves. Second, dominant group members advocate for change. Third, powerful members of the dominant group made changes in the law.

But discrimination may occur not only between groups but between individuals as well. Someone experiencing discrimination may discriminate against others, completely unrelated to the primary source of discrimination. This mechanism, when we direct feelings of anger or hostility against people who are not related to the origins of our anxiety, is called displacement. We pick scapegoats to blame as a source of our trouble. The "scapegoat" term originated in the Hebrew ritual described in the Book of Leviticus, where the signs of people were symbolically transferred to a goat taking them to the desert. Scapegoating involves projection. Instead of facing unwanted characteristics, individuals, or groups project them onto others. This mechanism is frequent as it gives us a positive self-image. What we do

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not accept in ourselves, we can try to attribute to others, so we feel good, right, and positive. This is an illusion. Minority groups with distinctive characteristics, such as Roma, blacks, Asians, Mexicans, Jews, and particularly those with little power to fight back, are often blamed for almost anything, unemployment, low salaries, crimes, etc.

People upon whom the negative characteristics are projected may internalise them and distance themselves from individuals or groups who remind them of it. Often provoked, they behave as if it is expected from them, thus putting in force the self-fulfilling prophecy.

Exercise

Recall the moment when you felt excluded from a group. Describe yourself from the perspective of the third person, as you would describe this scene from the distance.

- **What did you look like?**
- **What did you say?**
- **What did you do?**
- **How did others treat you?**

Accept that:
- There is more than one way to look at things,
- We can learn and develop by listening to others,
- No one has the answer to everything,
- We create our own opinions and make decisions and only we ourselves are responsible for them.

<u>Exercise</u>

Think of examples of behaviour in the following categories:

- **Avoidance – ignoring people, escaping from contact,**
- **Verbal hostility – jokes, teasing, name calling,**
- **Unfairness – excluding someone form a group, not helping people,**
- **Physical attack**

<u>Exercise</u>

Research the anti-discrimination laws in your country. Find out the name of the law, when it was enacted, for what purpose and how it is enforced.

DO NOT EXCUSE VERBAL PREJUDICE.

DO NOT IGNORE DISCIMINATORY REMARKS OR BEHAVIOUR.

<u>8. Conflict</u>

Conflict is an incompatibility of actions or goals. We can distinguish conflicts between individuals, groups, and nations. In international conflict history, ideology, and economics are involved. Conflict often entails reciprocal views of one another. Each group in conflict may view itself as moral and peace loving, and the other as aggressive and evil. This is called a mirror-image perception. When groups are in competition or conflict, or members of one group fear those of another, discrimination in favour of one's own group, and unfavourable attitudes toward members of the other groups become norms.

Exercise

Read about conflict in a newspaper or magazine. Try to determine the structure of the conflict. Discuss in pairs the possible solutions of the conflict. Compare solutions with your classmates. Together evaluate the resolution of the conflict.

9. Ethnicity

This term comes from the Greek work *ethnickis*, the adjective of *ethnos*. This refers to a people or nation. Nowadays ethnicity has been variously defined. It may be identified with physical features, a common language, religion, shared ancestry, and history. The term ethnic group describes a group of people aware of having common origins, shared experiences and interests.

10. Identity

Identity can be defined as a relatively stable structure of values, feelings and representations toward oneself. "Me" identity is created both through identification with parents and other meaningful adults, and through differentiation from them. It is also developed as a relatively stable set of self-evaluations, self-controls, and the control of one's own life and immediate environment.

Among the spheres of identity it is possible to list: history, concrete territory and social group, culture, language, customs, religion, transfer of tradition, historical genealogy, personality, ethnic stereotypes, economic condition, social needs and aims, life goals, life models, political, economic contexts, and worldviews. Language, apart from tradition or religion, is one of the crucial elements of culture determining identity.

Ethnic identity relates to a sense of commonality of origin, beliefs, values, and customs of a specific group of people.

<u>Exercise</u>

The Ethnic Identity Development Exercise (EIDE) is designed to help to explore the concept of ethnic identity and examine one's own as well as other ethnic identities.

Materials: markers, crayons, and blank white paper.

Instruction: Now we examine influences, which helped you shape a sense of your ethnic identity. On a piece of paper write or draw the different factors (for example, important relationships with people, events, activities, media, literature, art, religious, spiritual, and educational activities, organizations, travels) that have helped to shape how you feel and think about yourself as part of a particular ethnic group. Include anything you feel has been relevant in your life. Take about 30 minutes and use whatever materials (markers, paper, etc.) you feel can help you make this description more complete.

After students complete this exercise, they should break into small groups, of three or four, to discuss their drawings and answer each other's questions. Discussion may include the following questions:

- **How did you decide what to draw?**
- **How would you describe your EIDE in your own words and images?**
- **What feelings, thoughts, and reactions do you have in response to other EIDEs in your small group?**

Next, the drawings should be displayed or passed around. The class should end with one large group discussion. Its purpose is to obtain detailed information about ethnic identity, and to compare and contrast experiences. Discussion may include the following questions:

- **What sort of themes emerged from doing this exercise?**
- **Was it difficult to complete this exercise?**
- **Why or why not?**
- **What reactions do you have from your small group meeting?**
- **Are there within- and across-group differences and similarities in the EIDEs?**
- **What common influences, people, events were typically involved in this developmental process?**
- **What else would you have liked to include in this exercise?**
- **How did this exercise influence your ideas about concepts of ethnic identity?**

11. Racism

> *"We...are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with".*
> (Matin Luther King, Jr.)

The most widespread prejudice throughout the world is racism - prejudice directed toward members of certain racial or ethnic groups. Racist attitudes precede the notion of "race" as inherited features, coming from the thought of Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, Adolf Hitler, Ku-Klux-Klan and extreme right-wing group ideology. Psychologists have offered many theories to explain why racism evolves. The term has many meanings in different settings and for different purposes; in modern societies it is an unacceptable phenomenon. Although the concept of racism is used in various ways, it always contains the idea of exclusion of certain ethnically

defined groups from various domains of public life. In other words, it is understood as a complex of factors, which produce disadvantage on the basis of race. Two main senses of the term are: the ideology or set of beliefs about racial superiority, i.e. scientific racism of the nineteenth century, and the popular term "racism" based on ethnocentrism, a tendency to believe that one's own culture is universal, neutral and superior to any other culture.

In social psychology literature, it is possible to distinguish three forms of racism: traditional or biological, modern or symbolic, and aversive, depending on different arguments or justifications for the exclusion of ethnic groups. Biological racists believe in the innate superiority of races, symbolic racists argue that out-groups pose a threat to the culture of in-groups, and aversive racists feel uneasiness and uncertainty in contact with ethnic groups. Traditional racist beliefs related to biological superiority of white people are being replaced by the so-called *new racism,* rooted in feelings that one's way of life is threatened by foreign cultures. The goal of young racists is a "racially pure" society. The neo-Nazi skinhead movement, which arose in the US in mid-eighties, is now present in 33 countries. It numbers some 70,000 youth worldwide.

Racist movements using anti-immigrant hostile slogans have grown in Europe since the mid-1980s. In the 1990s, after the fall of Communism, neofascist political movements spread widely both in Western and Eastern Europe. In the context of expectations created by political reforms and the everyday deprivations, extreme nationalists were able to attract support by blaming minorities, such as Roma and Jews for social and economic ills. The *Vlaams Blok* in Belgium, the *Front National* in France, and *Deutsche Volksunion* in Germany used immigration and anti-Semitism as key words in their political campaigns. Physical attacks on racial and ethnic minorities, Turks in Germany and Roma in Hungary, Czech Republic and Romania, accompanied the defence of "national" interest rhetoric.

In several countries there was a reaction against the wave of racists attacks, including self-defence strategies of minority communities and demonstrations of antiracist groups against violence aimed at foreigners, minorities, and refugees.

Exercise

Students are divided into groups of five or six. Half of the groups are given the task to create a Global Nation. These groups exploit values of extreme nationalism to create a global nation against the alien invaders. The remaining groups are given the Integration and Plurality task and are asked to devise strategies to appeal to the liberal principles and to plead for integration of the aliens who would enrich national culture and increase plurality.

This exercise can be followed by a session analysing any current or ongoing conflict in the world designed to create a separate nation state, such as that in Canada between Francophone and Anglophones, or in Bosnia among Bosnian Serbs and Muslims. Students may bring various newspapers of that day, both respected ones and the more sensational tabloid papers. After the brainstorming session, each groups is asked to present its arguments for adopting a particular strategy and to detail the methods by which they would be implemented.

The purpose of this exercise is to raise consciousness of the pervasiveness of the nationalist ideology, and constructs of ethnicity, nationalism, and race. At the end of the session students should be aware that the concept of the nation should be used for the benefit and advantage of all groups within the nation.

DO NOT CONDEMN OTHERS, NOR SHOW PREJUDICE TO ANY,
REGARDLESS OF RACE, RELIGION OR GENDER.

MAKE SURE THAT RACIST; ANTI-SEMITIC OR ANTI-ISLAMIC SLOGANS
ARE NOT PRESENT ON THE WALLS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.
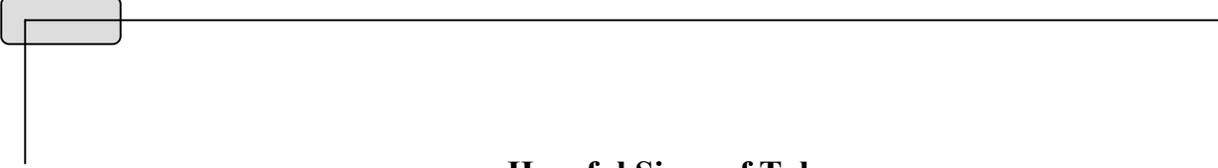
Hopeful Signs of Tolerance

Some indicators can be used as both tools of assessment and the basis of designing goals for learning tolerance. Educational programmes must be directed to integrate these indicators:

- *Language Indicator:* A tolerant society or social group is the one, whose language lacks racial, ethnic and gender epithets. In addition, in reporting on certain events or people, the media refrain from using words or expressions that show prejudiced, biased, offensive, and demeaning attitude. If that particular country has national minorities, then the preservation and development of minority languages is encouraged.

- *Legal Equality Indicator:* In a tolerant society there is legal equality between all members of the society. Each member of the society has access to social benefits, as well as an opportunity to participate in the government or public activities regardless of his or her sex, race, nationality, religion, social class, etc. Legal equality means that the rights and responsibilities, as well as social freedoms of every member of the society are equal. As an indicator of tolerance, legal equality also means equal degree of responsibility before the law for all persons, regardless their factual differences, such as, the colour of their skin, the language, etc. Legal equality also excludes any special privileges and advantages accorded by the law to the parties of legal disputes.

- *Social Indicator:* In a tolerant society, social relations are based on mutual respect for public accord, assistance and human dignity. In a tolerant society, the minimal social

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requirements of all members must be met in order to prevent any social-proprietary polarisation. If the person does not have an apartment or is hungry, it is very difficult to demand tolerance from him or her. Such a person would be more likely to follow the survival instinct rather than universal values and sacred commandments.

- *Political Indicator:* The society is tolerant, if its political ideologies do not advocate violence, whereas political processes are always of a constructive and democratic nature. In making decisions, the political majority takes the minority's opinion into consideration. For that purpose, the law in democratic countries formulates the rights of political minorities.

- *National Minority Status Indicator*: In a tolerant society, conditions are created to assure that the cultural integrity and languages of national minorities are preserved. There is a climate of respect for national dignity and rights. A virtuous and tolerant dominant nation is the one that helps smaller nations preserve their language and culture. In a culture of tolerance, the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural peculiarities of various peoples, as well as the colour of their skin, cannot become sources of social clashes and conflicts.

- *Religious Indicator:* Intolerance is most commonly developed on religious grounds. The reason is the belligerent attitude of some religions and beliefs towards representatives of other religions. In a tolerant society, all people have equal rights regardless of their attitude to religion. Any infringement on the rights of citizens on the basis of their religion, as well as religious violence and hatred are forbidden. In a tolerant society, religious or atheist organizations are separate from the state. Not only the state, but also the state educational systems are of a secular nature. The culture of a tolerant society provides that all religions and religious organizations are equal before the law, whereas all religions advocating violence, intolerance and other inhuman values are banned.

- *Dialogue Indicator:* A society is tolerant, when all social problems are settled on the basis of participation and dialogue of all members, social, cultural, religious, and political groups of the society. A tolerant society develops a common strategy for each situation by taking all the existing points of view into consideration. Being a constructive world view, tolerance gives diverse groups an opportunity to see not only the circumstances and factors that make them different, but also the common interests that bridge them together. For instance, completely different cultures and cultural traditions are in contact with each other in the modern world. The humanity must learn to engage in a cultural dialogue. No one must think his or her culture is absolute. All people must be raised in the spirit of cultural tolerance and respect for diverse cultures.
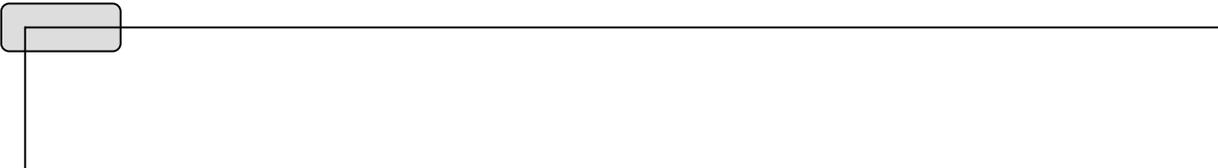
How to counter Intolerance

- *Fighting intolerance requires laws*: Each government is responsible for enforcing human rights laws, for banning and punishing hate crimes and discrimination against minorities, whether state officials, private organizations, or individuals commit them.

- *Fighting intolerance requires education*: Laws are necessary but not sufficient for countering intolerance in individual attitudes. Intolerance is very often rooted in ignorance and fear: fear of the unknown, of the *other*, other cultures, nations, and religions. Intolerance is also closely linked to an exaggerated sense of self-worth and pride, whether personal or religious. These notions are taught and learned at an early age. Therefore, greater emphasis needs to be placed on education. Greater efforts need to be made to teach children about tolerance and human rights, about other ways of life. Children should be encouraged at home and in school to be open-minded and curious. Education is a life-long experience

and does not begin or end in school. Endeavors to build tolerance through education will not succeed unless they reach all age groups, and take place everywhere: at home, in schools, in the workplace, etc.

- *Fighting intolerance requires access to information*: Intolerance is most dangerous when it is exploited to fulfill the political and territorial ambitions of an individual or group of individuals.

- *Fighting intolerance requires individual awareness*: Intolerance breed's intolerance. In order to fight intolerance individuals should become aware of the link between their behaviour and the various cycles of mistrust, and violence in society. Each one of us should begin by asking: am I a tolerant person? Do I stereotype people? Do I reject those who are different from me? Do I blame my problems on 'them'?

- *Fighting intolerance requires local solutions*: Many people know that tomorrow's problems will be increasingly global but few realize that solutions to global problems are mainly local, even individual. When confronted with an escalation of intolerance around us, we must not wait for governments and institutions to act alone. We are all part of the solution.
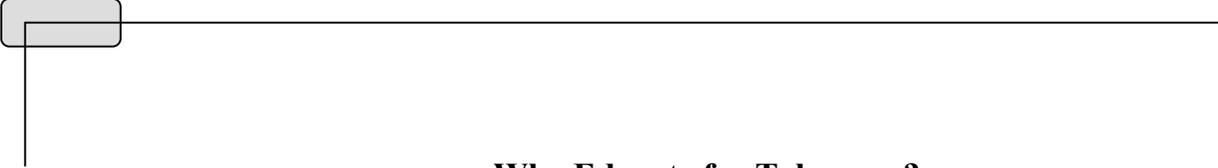
Why Educate for Tolerance?

More than 2,000 years ago, Plato asked in the *Meno*, What is virtue, and can we teach it? The question asked in this section is similar: What is tolerance and can we teach it? The answer to this question is crucial. If we do not know what tolerance is how can we possibly teach it? As with virtue for Plato, we shall see that tolerance is much more

difficult to define than it might seem. Even if we arrive at a clear definition of tolerance it does not necessarily mean that we will be able to teach it. Plato, for example, after defining virtue, argued that it is innate, not learned, and therefore we cannot instruct others in how to be virtuous.

As with Plato's question in the *Meno*, our simple questions (What is it? Can we teach it?), imply subsidiary questions. If tolerance is learned, how and when is it learned? Is tolerance essentially a personality trait formed, if not in *utero*, at least in the course of early childhood socialisation? If tolerance is that kind of trait, formal educational institutions will not be able to have much effect on it. On the other hand, if tolerance is learned in schools, how is it learned in that environment? Is it taught as part of the curriculum or is it learned in more subtle ways? And perhaps most importantly, *should* we teach it?

Societies educate to serve socially constructive purposes. Often those purposes relate to particular goals and problems. As education prepares citizens to participate in the process of social, cultural, environmental, and economic development, education provides instruction about the threats to the natural environment and encourages behaviour to overcome them, education for tolerance has also socially constructive purposes. The social process it seeks to facilitate is peace building through the observance of human rights and the practice of democracy. The problem it seeks to confront is intolerance, a severe and major threat to human rights, democracy and peace.
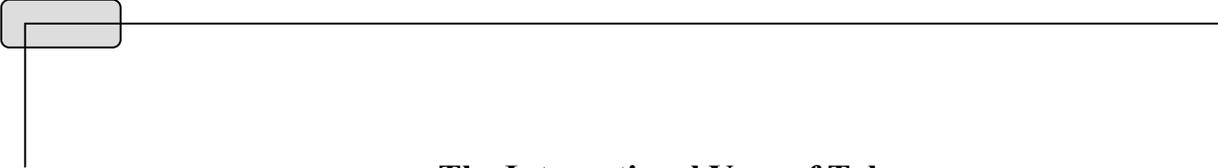
The International Year of Tolerance

Upon an initiative by UNESCO, the United Nations decided to proclaim 1995, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of both organizations, the International Year of Tolerance. International years are occasions to generate fresh thinking, debate, and awareness. Most often to focus on a specific target group, field of action, or issue. The International Year for Tolerance, for the first time, put the accent on a personal virtue that is increasingly viewed as a political and legal requirement for peaceful co-existence.

The appreciation of diversity, the ability to live and let others live, the ability to adhere to one's convictions while accepting that others adhere to theirs, the ability to enjoy one's rights and freedoms without infringing on those of others. Tolerance has always been considered as a moral virtue.

As a follow-up to the United Nations Year for Tolerance which was celebrated on the initiative of UNESCO in 1995, UNESCO published three volumes of educational material on tolerance: *Tolerance – The Threshold of Peace*. It is hoped that more educators will be involved in this effort to develop a 'pedagogy of tolerance'. This project was launched in the context of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). It is a project that places education for tolerance within the framework of education for peace, human rights, and democracy.

It is also cast within UNESCO's Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy that bring together within a comprehensive approach those three main elements as essential to a culture of peace. It recognises that education for tolerance within such an approach requires the active involvement of entire communities.
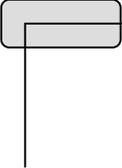
Tolerance Education as a Global Movement

Everywhere in the world, even in societies where conflict has broken out into violence, there are those who want to have peace and develop tolerance. Here are a few examples of what others might imitate in their own country:

- ***Inter-religious understanding***: A number of groups throughout the world have addressed the need for education about the various religions of any nation in order to increase understanding and overcome the intolerance born of ignorance. One example is the extensive programme to teach about Islam in the United Kingdom by non-government organizations. A project on interfaith dialogue has been launched by the Future Generations Programme, at the University of Malta.

- ***Common schooling and encounters of groups in conflict***: In deeply divided societies, the desire for change nearly always comes from the grass roots. Such is the case with much of 'Education for Mutual Understanding' in Northern Ireland and similar efforts in Israel, South Africa, and other countries.

The philosophy and structure of every school have to be directed to the creation of tolerance. In different parts of the world, these schools are variously known as 'co-educational', 'interdenominational', 'mixed race', 'integrated', and 'comprehensive'. Whatever their name, their goals are the same – to teach children from different communities together on the basis of equality by having the governors, teaching staff, student body and curriculum reflect each community with equal weight.

- *Civic education for multi-cultural society*: In Israel, a Department for Democracy and Coexistence has been established. It publicizes guidelines and assists in the development of educational programmes and projects throughout the country, emphasizing in-service teacher training. The programme for children relies heavily on the arts and on practice of skills of participation in a democratic society, especially discussion and the debate of controversial issues.

- *Action for our common future multi-cultural education*: The Friedrich-Ebert Foundation in Namibia has produced a mixed media package in six indigenous languages. The package defines tolerance as 'collective action and concern for our common future'.

- *Sharing space and purpose*: A UNESCO Associated School in Slovenia has devised a model programme for Slovene and Bosnian children at an elementary level.

- *Extra-curricular activities*: Among the European countries where educators are responding to the challenges of multiculturalism, France has been especially active in the extra-curricular area, encouraging encounters between adolescents of different cultures, thereby providing opportunities for open discussions to help the young understand differences and see them in a complementary relationship.

- *Celebrating the potential of youths*: The celebration of human identity is found in virtually all cultures. Celebration is a mode for sharing those aspects of cultural identity that mark human communities. Cultural festivals of all sorts are a very effective approach to intercultural understanding within and across international borders.

- *Observing the international day for tolerance*: An International Day for Tolerance can serve as an annual occasion for debating the role of education in building tolerance as well as for wider social and political reflection, and debate

on local and global problems of intolerance, also as a moment to take stock of the progress made during the year and to propose fresh policies to close remaining gaps.

- *Healing wounds of identity***:** National and ethnic conflict can inflict deep wounds on identity. Healing such wounds is part of the mission of the Osnova School, which has been working with the Primary School for Refuge Children from Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1992. The Osnova School also emphasizes the value of solidarity in its project in its support of the educational need of refugee children to continue to be educated in their own cultural framework.

- *Study of different cultures***:** Looking at cultures: their customs, traditions, religions, written and oral forms of communication, festivals, and cuisine; field trips to cultural sites, to churches of different denominations, to cultural centers, to war museums, to exhibitions which have relevance to class topics. Writing essays or poems, drawing charts or illustrations on the meaning of peace, tolerance or conflict resolution.
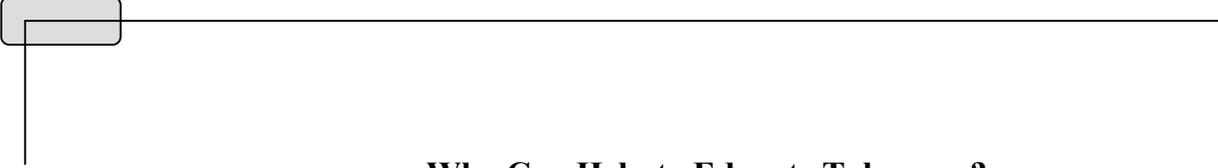
Who Can Help to Educate Tolerance?

Every constituent of the community can contribute to educating tolerance. Town councils could set up a week to celebrate the different groups in the community and what they have contributed to communal life. Churches and religious organizations could coordinate programmes on religious tolerance, hold inter-religious dialogues, set up guidelines for teaching inter-religious respect in the community and schools, and encourage study and discussions on religious tolerance.

Schools are laboratories for the practice of tolerance. School or 'schooling' in the sense of intentional instruction that socializes children and youth, whether it takes place within or outside a formally constituted school, is the most direct means for teaching social values. Schools can be arenas for community building. They must be places in which tolerance is practiced as well as taught. Just as the society at large and the school as the institutional agent of education must be organized for and exemplify the values and practices of tolerance, each classroom should also be an environment for nurturing tolerant attitudes and for developing the capacities to practice them.

Educational authorities could introduce a resource pack to parents' and teachers' organizations, asking for suggestions about how the guidelines and directions could be adopted to the local situation and to understanding problems of intolerance and issues of human rights.

Parents and members of local associations who have special experience or knowledge of intolerance or who work for human rights organizations could volunteer to share these experiences in school assemblies and classrooms.

The role of the home and the family in the creation of tolerant and peaceful attitudes and respect for human rights is fundamental. Parents and caregivers need to be prepared to bring up the young in ways that enable them to develop capacities for tolerance and peacemaking.

Community and social workers could develop action programmes to assess and confront problems of intolerance that affect their localities and clients.

Churches and schools could provide venues for programmes to review and look for solutions to local issues and problems of intolerance in the community. Assistance to and solidarity with victims of intolerance on the part of parents and the community are likely to be the most powerful instruction in education for tolerance that the young could receive.

Many communities throughout the world have confronted their problems and produced solutions through popular educational movements. Such movements view many problems that confront particular communities and the global society as problems of learning. They view learning in both its social and individual forms as essentially a participatory process. Individuals develop knowledge and skills, which contribute to the capacity of communities to deal with their problems. For many communities, intolerance is a major problem and popular movements can therefore be valuable agents in educating tolerance.
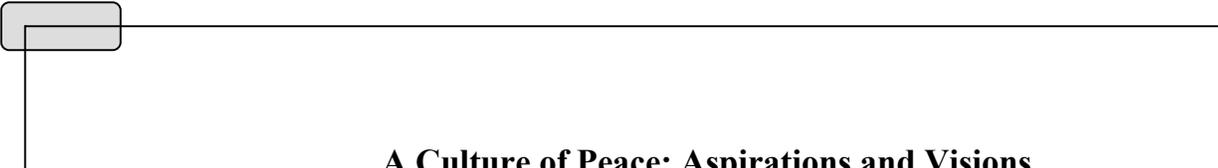
A Culture of Peace: Aspirations and Visions

The following aspirations and visions characterize a culture of peace:

- A culture of peace would be a culture of freedom and universal respect, upholding all human rights and eliminating double standards.

- A culture of peace would be a 'festival of diversities'. It would be based upon the diversities of different cultures and appreciation of the 'other', meaning complete refusal of dominance, exploitation and discrimination in all human relations and social structures.

- A culture of peace would acknowledge the responsibilities of solidarity, in which the relief of suffering of peoples is taken to be responsibility of the entire world community. In a culture of peace, peoples are neither exploitable nor expendable. A culture of peace assures the dignity and the well being of the vulnerable.

- A culture of peace should be built upon the recognition of the realities of global interdependence, common human needs and common responsibilities for the future. In a culture of peace, the person is enabled to develop the full range of human capacities unlimited by constraints of gender or other aspects of human identities.

- In a culture of peace, persons would be educated to value solidarity, mutuality and justice, and be provided with the skills to enable them to renounce violence as a means to achieve social or individual purposes.

- In a culture of peace, conflicts need not produce violence, differences would be mediated in a spirit of mutuality; and disputes settled in ways, which reconcile and strengthen communities.

- In a culture of peace, there would be a place for both ancient wisdom and new knowledge.

- In a culture of peace, there would be space to express creativity and share feelings.

- In a culture of peace, there would produce a social order based on equal human rights, dignity of all persons, and reverence for living creatures and life systems.
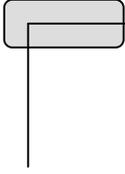
Conclusion

An appeal should be made to Heads of States and Governments, to Ministers and officials responsible for education, to Mayors of all cities, towns and villages, to all teachers, to religious communities, to journalists and to all parents:

- To educate our children with a sense of openness and comprehension towards other people, their diverse cultures and histories and their fundamental shared humanity;

- To teach them the importance of refusing violence and adopting peaceful means for resolving disagreements and conflicts;

- To forge in the next generation's feelings of altruism, openness and respect towards others, solidarity and sharing based on a sense of security in one's own identity and a capacity to recognise the many dimensions of being human in different cultural and social contexts.

It is crucial for all of us to continue to give meaning to the word 'tolerance' and understand that our ability to value each and every person is the ethical basis for peace, security, and intercultural dialogue. A peaceful future depends on our everyday acts and gestures. Let us educate tolerance in our schools and communities, in our homes and workplace, and, most of all, in our hearts and minds.

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[i] M. Lopes, Realities of Stereotypes, National Network for Child Care; http://www.exnet.iastate.edu