



all different, all equal :
from principle to practice

European contribution to the world conference against
RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA
and **RELATED INTOLERANCE**

Strasbourg, 11 - 13 October 2000

EUROCONF (2000) 10 III

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP III

Education and awareness-raising to combat racism, related discrimination and extremism at sub-national, national, regional and international levels

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16 October 2000

WORKING GROUP III: Education and awareness-raising to combat racism, related discrimination and extremism at sub-national, national, regional and international levels.

Rapporteur: Mr Jenö Kaltenbach

At the opening session, Ms Monica Macovei gave an overview of the paper she had presented as a basis for the Working Group's discussions. Baroness Sarah Ludford then highlighted several points:

- the need to listen to the NGOs - not least because the composition of the NGO Forum was far more ethnically mixed than that of the Conference;
- the essential message that racism is bad for the *majority*;
- the importance of asylum and immigration in the debate;
- the need for pro-active, non-neutral education and awareness-raising, celebrating diversity and showing the benefits to be gained from learning about others;
- the dilemma and potential contradictions in categorising those discriminated against as victims and the need to show images of success;
- the importance of educating and training adults, in particular decision-makers, public authorities, police, judges and immigration officials;
- the best way of learning being to live and work in a multicultural environment;
- the question "when does pride in a culture run the risk of becoming introverted and potentially racist?"

A range of speakers, from NGOs, intergovernmental organisations and governments then contributed to the debates, structured around five main headings:

- the general and historical context, including contemporary forms of racism;
- schools and (formal) education;
- the training of professionals;
- non-formal education and general awareness-raising;
- remaining points/conclusions.

I. The general and historical context, including contemporary forms of racism raised a number of diverse points. Several interventions focused on questions of terminology: unhappiness was expressed over use of the words "vulnerable" groups and "tolerance". The essentially discriminatory nature of the term "third country nationals" was also mentioned.

The pervasiveness throughout Europe of institutionalised racism needs to be confronted, it was said. Political and public discourse is highly important and *all* governments should condemn xenophobic policies. One participant felt that Europe should condemn and apologise for its colonial past and make reparation.

The central, basic need identified was that of changing attitudes from a person's earliest days. Silence in the face of discrimination needs to be tackled just as much as outright racist activity.

It was felt that more attention needs to be given to non-formal education and life-long learning, especially if the importance of the work carried out by NGOs and other organisations is to be recognised.

Youth groups are of central importance not only as targets, but also as resource persons, educators and trainers, with valuable experience of their own. Support should be given not only to NGOs but also to the groups who themselves are experiencing discrimination; how else can they afford to play their role?

It was suggested that further studies still need to be made in order to get a better understanding of the phenomenon of racism, its philosophical and psychological bases. One proposal was made for the establishment of a European Centre to conduct such studies.

Finally, mention was made of the relevance of the substantive norms of not only human rights law, but also international humanitarian law in formal and non-formal education as well as the training of professional groups. Racism and similar phenomena are often at the origin of conflicts as well as the cause of violations of rules applicable in armed conflicts.

II. In relation to (formal) education and schools

(a) Points of *principle* raised included the following:

Human rights and anti-racism teaching should be mandatory in the curricula of all primary and secondary schools in Europe. Intercultural and human rights education should not be taught as subjects but rather as principles of practice, as attitudes. Representatives of the target groups *must* be involved in the development of such curricula.

The State itself and its authorities and institutions must practice tolerance and "anti-oppressive" behaviour for these to be taught effectively.

Equal access to education must be afforded to all young people, including asylum seekers (some of whom are put in prison instead of school). The school as a microcosm of society should reflect the balances within that society. There has to be more equal access to, and advancement within, the teaching profession itself: children need role models, among the teachers, principals, inspectors and other authorities, with whom they can identify.

Schools and other institutions should not be reacting to crises but acting in such a manner as to preclude them. Their structures need to be adapted for diversity rather than constitute layers added on.

A review needs to be made of what is being taught in schools. The *teaching of history* was singled out for particular discussion. It was proposed that a further, more detailed survey be carried out of European history textbooks. Teaching of national history should rather look at the "nation" as a geographical entity, rather than an ethnic one. While the need for minorities to establish their own identities through their own history was understood, it was considered equally important to see national history encompassing the history of all the constituent parts of the nation. The gender perspective should also not be overlooked in the teaching of history. Teaching about the Holocaust should be regarded as a starting point within Europe for human rights education.

The issue of teaching in one's own *language* also gave rise to some debate. The comparative advantages and disadvantages of being taught in one's original language or in the host language, in terms of ease of learning, the elimination of differences in the classroom, easier access to higher education and the workplace, and so on were discussed. A divergence of opinions and practice showed how this issue remains a difficult one about which to generalise. It was thought it should be a question to be resolved by the minorities themselves within the specific circumstances.

A proposal for Central European co-operation on education for the less favoured, in particular Roma, was highlighted.

(b) A number of *Good practices* were identified, including:

- the creation of "racism-free spaces" within schools and "Schools without Racism"; 'hosting' and exchange programmes between schools of different backgrounds; an annual "Global education week", bringing non-formal methods to the formal school system (Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, North-South Centre);
- the active recruitment of qualified teaching assistants from the respective language groups;
- teachers from different conflict areas in Europe coming together to review history teaching;
- the use of sport as a tool to combat discrimination – e.g., "Show Racism the Red Card".

However, there was a feeling that, while there might be no shortage of good ideas, rarely is the necessary financing found, indicating lack of real commitment to implementation. Most importantly, it was stressed that "good practices" can only be identified by the beneficiary or target group; those discriminated against must be consulted and must be part of the development of

such projects for them to be effective. Good practices should be continuing and never fall into the trap of “tokenism”.

III. The discussion then moved on to the training of professional groups, and some regret was expressed that NGOs had not been included as one such group.

(a) A certain number of issues of *principle* were discussed.

Before considering basic or in-service training, it was felt that one should look at recruitment and promotion policies; these need to be changed. If national training centres are established, these must be staffed by minorities, persons with experience of the problems faced. Concerning professional training, this should not be limited to “key” groups; it should include health professionals and all working in the public sphere. It should not end with training but also include reference, for example, to related performance review. (The ICRC made mention here of the visibility of the results of training of armed forces and police in terms of their behaviour.) Training for professional groups should be linked to policies and practice for the inclusion of targeted groups in the workplace: mediator services, and other consultation opportunities, need to be promoted by governments.

The kind of training that professionals need, it was suggested, is not so much awareness training but rather training in acting in an “anti-oppressive” manner. This often requires a fundamental change of culture of the profession. In this sense, “tolerance” is not what is needed but respect for one another.

Care must be taken by governments to include minorities in training in information technology, in order to avoid their even greater marginalisation from society.

Whatever materials and programmes are developed to train in anti-racist attitudes, none are of any use unless they are widely disseminated.

(b) In terms of *good practice*:

- one government representative spoke of the diversity training, basic and in-service, given to key personnel in the field of teaching, health and social welfare, journalism, policing; to have any impact, training to combat racism must be continuing;
- another participant told of efforts to select and train members of a minority community to work with that community in the social sphere.

IV. The issue of Non-formal education and general awareness-raising produced a range of exchanges, from how to mount a successful campaign, including how to ensure that the World Conference against Racism is meaningful, to the central role of children and youth groups in changing society's attitudes and to life-long education.

(a) In order to be effective, public awareness campaigns must have a clear message, direct appeal and immediate relevance to those they target. They must be repetitive and/or ongoing over a considerable period, be media-attractive and be memorable. They have to be participatory, hands-on, collective efforts, bringing members of the community and different professions together. They need to have a multiplying effect. Most importantly, they must involve the target group in their design and development and, above all, carry with them real political commitment.

For maximum impact, it was said, the different European institutions should try to combine efforts for pan-European campaigns.

The success of a campaign may be evaluated in terms of changed behaviour of those targeted; empowerment of minority groups through knowledge of their rights; and impact on the indifferent.

The key role of young people and children was once again underlined. It was regretted that delegations to the European Conference could not have included more youth representatives. The importance of including youth groups in national delegations to the World Conference against Racism was felt very strongly within the group. More generally, the process of selecting national delegations must be transparent and include relevant target groups rather than just government officials. Before South Africa, some lessons could perhaps be learned from the organisation of this European Conference.

Awareness-raising for asylum-seekers in Europe, it was felt, sorely needs attention.

(b) *Good practices* mentioned included:

- various aspects of the "all different all equal" campaign, whose impact continues to be felt, through the networks it established and the tools it developed. A key factor was its development by youth groups for youth groups; another was its ability to give core funding to micro-projects throughout Europe;
- exchange programmes for young people from different family backgrounds, both in the same country and across borders;
- in Canada, the annual national anti-racism campaign day targetting youth groups;

- in France, cooperation with embassies in developing programmes for immigrants;
- in the USA, public service announcements seen on TV showing refugees are you and I in more difficult circumstances.

V. Concluding remarks

Awareness-raising programmes have to include the frank acknowledgement of historical injustices and on-going patterns of discrimination as well as the moral and legal responsibilities that follow from this.

Majority populations and heirs to privilege must be prepared to engage in a constructive dialogue with representatives of targeted groups concerning their demands for compensation and redress.

Finally, the question was put as to whether education is really what is most important in the fight against racism and racial discrimination. It was suggested that racism is essentially a system devised to exclude others from economic power; in this sense, it is a change of attitudes and mind-sets that is needed, beginning with what parents teach their children.