



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO
Associated
Schools



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Schools

Third Collection of **Good Practices** Intercultural Dialogue in Support of Quality Education





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Good Practices

Intercultural Dialogue
in Support of **Quality Education**

UNESCO Associated Schools
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Acronyms

ASPnet	UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, commonly called UNESCO Associated Schools
DESD	Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HIV and AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
TST	Transatlantic Slave Trade
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations
WHC	World Heritage Centre
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction



The promotion of dialogue in order to build “peace in the minds of men” has been a priority for UNESCO since its founding. Globalization and new challenges to humankind have made this need for dialogue and exchange among peoples more urgent than ever before. In a world of unprecedented and accelerated change, education has a crucial role to play in promoting peaceful coexistence.

Education initiatives that encourage intercultural dialogue between students of different origins can help to build a more peaceful and sustainable society whose members are open to lifestyles and belief systems different from their own. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):

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

Teaching and learning about human rights form a major aspect of UNESCO’s rights-based work in education. Along with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Organization jointly coordinates the World Programme for Human Rights Education, which stresses the need for tolerance and respect of all peoples through the inclusion of human rights principles in the school and the curriculum.

Since its creation in 1953, the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) has integrated human rights principles in its mission, on the principle that human rights-based projects create a “human rights-friendly” environment that helps learners to promote human rights in their daily lives. Such an environment also ensures gender equality so that girls and boys not only have equal chances to enrol in school but equal opportunities once they are in the classroom. In this regard, ASPnet is a gender-sensitive network which insists on gender-balanced delegations to its numerous regional and international meetings.

ASPnet conducts pilot projects aimed at reinforcing the humanistic and ethical principles of UNESCO in school curricula and throughout the learning process, often within the framework of UN and UNESCO International Days, Years and Decades. Promoting intercultural dialogue is thus an ASPnet priority.

The initiatives presented in this Third Collection of ASPnet Good Practices were carried out by ASPnet schools and their partner institutions in the context of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010). The selected projects illustrate both multicultural education and intercultural education in action. According to the UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education (2006), the former uses learning about other cultures so as to cultivate respect and tolerance while the latter aims at learning to live together in culturally diverse societies through dialogue. Both approaches are a response to the challenge to provide quality Education for All. They aim to equip students with the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to participate fully in society in a spirit of solidarity among individuals, groups and nations, in keeping with the UNESCO Constitution (1945) which recommends using communication “for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other’s lives”.

The aims of intercultural education also complement the four pillars of education as identified in *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Report to UNESCO of the International



Reading and listening to a poem in
Kazakhstan © UNESCO/Livia Saldari

Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. Also known as the Delors Report, it proposes a comprehensive view of quality education and forms an integral part of the overarching ASPnet strategy. According to the report, education should be broadly based on four pillars:

1. Learning to know, by “combining sufficiently broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in-depth on a small number of projects”. The report also states that “a general education brings a person into contact with other languages and areas of knowledge, and... makes communication possible.”
2. Learning to do, in order to “acquire... the competence to deal with many situations and to work in teams.”
3. Learning to live together, by “developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence – carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts – in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding..., peace and cultural diversity.”
4. Learning to be, “so as to better develop one’s personality and be able to act with ever greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility. Such education must be based on the right to difference.”

In her appeal for a new humanism in October 2010, the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova reaffirmed that:

“All countries are actors in a single globalization process in which all must be able to participate. In this context, building a human community requires surely more than fostering mutual tolerance, respect or understanding, as societies separate from one another. Surely we need deeper cooperation and a stronger reconciliation pursued through common projects – projects that may be seen as a preamble to our mutual understanding.”

Such common projects – at the school level – can be found in this Third Collection of ASPnet Good Practices. The selected examples present intercultural dialogues under thematic headings:

- a platform for debating world concerns
- a foundation for social inclusion
- remembering the past, to understand the present and to prepare a better future
- a prerequisite for social cohesion and national reconciliation
- the key to respect for cultural diversity
- an inherent dimension of World Heritage education

The initiatives presented were carried out by young citizens and their teachers at the grassroots in all regions of the world, in public, private, rural and urban settings. They contributed substantially to the priorities of the International Year for the rapprochement of Cultures. The selection of projects was a challenge: the criteria included innovativeness, impact, and – especially – the multiplier effect.



Learning to live together through sport
in Trinidad and Tobago
© UNESCO/Livia Saldari

“Little streams make big rivers”, as the saying goes. One of the roles of ASPnet is to ensure a multiplier effect by collecting initiatives and innovations developed by its schools and sharing them widely for the benefit of other educational institutions and education stakeholders in general. We hope these projects will serve as a launching pad for many more initiatives which can be undertaken by schools in all parts of the world, so that in addressing critical issues they fulfil their roles as agents of change and catalysts for a more peaceful and harmonious society. The ingredients of successful intercultural dialogue projects are discussed in the guidelines provided at the end of the document.

Quality education – a moving target

A broad definition of quality education, beyond literacy, numeracy and basic life skills, was articulated at the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990) and reaffirmed at the World Education Forum (Dakar, 2000) which stated that quality was “at the heart of education”. The expanded definition of quality set out the desirable characteristics of learners (healthy, motivated students), processes (competent teachers using active pedagogies), content (relevant curricula) and systems (good governance and equitable resource allocation).

This vision thus encompasses pertinence, universal values, peace and security, and informed decision-making. However, the definition of quality continues to evolve as education is increasingly required to be relevant to the modern world. Where emphasis was formerly placed on cognitive understanding and development, today there is a need to also address the social and other dimensions of education – including gender equality – which is expected to contribute to sustainable human development, peace and security, and the quality of life at individual, family, societal and global levels.

1. A platform for debating world concerns



Students from different European countries discuss a joint activity
© UNESCO/Livia Saldari

There is an urgent need for young people to not only become aware of the pressing issues facing humanity but to be in a position to seek and take positive actions to address them. Development plans and policies have often overlooked cultural dimensions and contexts. Yet these are an essential and inherent part of any planning for the future and should not be underestimated or ignored.

UNESCO Associated Schools engage in twinning and thematic cultural exchanges with schools in other countries, using "snail mail", e-mail, teleconferencing and Skype. In some cases, twinning has been the outcome of encounters made at ASPnet regional or international meetings, teacher training sessions or youth fora. After months of preparation, and where distance and funding allow, partnerships can result in an exchange visit.

Across oceans and continents UNESCO Associated Schools address contemporary topics and exchange their views with their peers on how to deal with them. The projects in this section cover such diverse topics as volcanoes, climate change, water conservation and HIV and AIDS.

Who selects the topic? This choice is made by students and teachers themselves, in cooperation with their partner school. Each side agrees to research a topic of contemporary concern within the four study areas: ASPnet and UN priorities; Education for Sustainable Development; Peace and Human Rights and Intercultural Learning. Once they have learned how the topic applies in their own country, they then learn how the other country approaches the same question. They proceed to compare, contrast and discuss. By closely examining any given major issue, students develop a deeper insight and awareness of the many social, economic and cultural ramifications which have to be taken into account in seeking solutions.

- French youth in Guadeloupe exchanged their experiences in coping with natural disasters, in particular volcanic eruptions, with a group of experts from nearby Montserrat, a British Overseas Territory
- A Jordanian student delegation travelled to Denmark to attend a conference on climate change organized by a Danish school and subsequently organized a cultural exchange with an Italian school
- From Oman to Germany and from Trinidad and Tobago to Spain, young people are joining forces to focus their attention on water conservation
- From the United Kingdom to Malawi, students are addressing the impact of HIV and AIDS

Dialogues about volcanoes and disaster preparedness

Background

During the annual meeting of ASPnet schools in Guadeloupe in 2009, the Lycée Professionnel Ducharmoy (Ducharmoy Secondary Technical School) presented its project about the 1976 eruption of the nearby volcano Soufrière, which occurred in 1976. Students had conducted research and interviewed a number of people who were evacuated during the eruption and thereby documented valuable oral memories of this eventful period. It was then suggested by a representative from the organization Contact et Recherche aux Caraïbes (Contact and Research in the Caribbean) that the project be shared with neighbouring English-speaking Montserrat whose volcano, Soufrière Hills, had erupted more recently (1995) and covered the capital, Plymouth, in a thick layer of ashes. The damage was so extensive that the capital had to be abandoned.

Project participants

Students and teachers from Guadeloupe schools: Some 100 students (aged between 15 and 20), 12 teachers and school staff from the secondary technical school; 50 students (aged between 15 and 17 years old) and four teachers from the general high school; 30 students and four teachers from two neighbouring junior high schools; five adults from Montserrat, the sub-regional ASPnet National Coordinator and the media.

Project objectives

- To enlarge students' vision of their geographical and cultural environment
- To engage in an intercultural dialogue with a neighbouring island concerning a policy of risk prevention with regard to natural disasters, and in particular, volcano eruptions
- To become more conscious of the value of Caribbean identity

Project implementation

Once it was decided to enter into contact with Montserrat, research was undertaken about this nearby island. Students then learned about the necessary interview techniques and conducted interviews with family members about the evacuation in Guadeloupe. Discussions were held on various aspects of prevention, risks and citizenship. Some of the students went to the archives to read newspaper articles about the November 1976 eruption. The Soufrière Volcano is situated just above Ducharmoy Secondary Technical School. Radio programmes about the project were prepared and disseminated every two weeks. A date was set to receive visitors from Montserrat, and a special programme was arranged by the students and staff. It was also decided to invite students and staff from the local general high school (lycée) in order to share with them this special event and to demonstrate the capacity of the students from the secondary technical school to organize such an encounter. Furthermore, through ASPnet, contact was made with a school in Auvergne (illustrating communication between the middle of the Caribbean and the centre of France), and a USB key containing documents on the evacuation relating to both of the volcanoes in Guadeloupe and Montserrat was sent to Auvergne in exchange for illustrative material on the volcanoes in this part of France. On 26 November 2009 the delegation from Montserrat arrived at the school. It comprised university

France

School:

Lycée Professionnel Ducharmoy –
secondary technical school

City:

Saint-Claude, Guadeloupe

Project Coordinator:

Ms Marie Touchelay
(teacher of Literature and History)



ASPnet students in Guadeloupe after a cultural performance
© Lycée Professionnel Ducharmoy/
ASPnet France



A guest from Montserrat participates in the radio interview
© Lycée Professionnel Ducharmoy/
ASPnet France

professors, a psychologist and a teacher. A conference on the prevention, risks and ramifications of volcanic eruptions was held in English. During the morning the radio team interviewed visitors and students and received the local RFO radio station team which broadcast its 1:00 p.m. news directly from the school. During and after lunch a cultural performance was organized for the delegation in order to give them a deeper insight into the culture of Guadeloupe. A guided visit of the school was conducted by members of the school community.

Challenges encountered

Just two weeks prior to the event, journalists had reported about violence at the school and it was difficult for the principal to persuade them to come back to report on more positive news, but in the end the principal succeeded and the media covered the event.

Skills acquired

Students developed their capacity to undertake research and present their findings. They improved their public speaking skills, even in a foreign language, English. Furthermore, they became good team members and organizers.

Changes in attitude

The project made the students much more conscious of being an integral part of the school, to realize who they were and why they were learning. They became more interested in neighbouring countries. Paradoxically, the Guadeloupe students knew a lot more about Metropolitan France, which is 7,000 kilometres away, than about the island of Montserrat, which is only 80 kilometres away. Few of the students even knew about the Soufrière Hills eruption or indeed about the existence of Montserrat and its links with the United Kingdom. Students gained a sense of self-worth and self-confidence thanks to the support and congratulations they received by visitors, students and teachers from the general high school.

Project results

- Extensive documentation of oral history of the community
- Successful hosting of a group of visitors from neighbouring Montserrat and discussions on risk prevention with regard to volcano eruptions
- Major transformations of knowledge, research capacities, outlook and maturity of students
- Students in difficulty became some of the prime actors of the project

Impact of the project

Students became more conscious of their Caribbean identity and the value of their island. For example, when the youngsters asked the academics from Montserrat why they did not leave their island after they had to flee their capital the visitors replied "because it is our island, just like yours, it is magnificent... would you be ready to leave your island?" Following the subsequent 2010 earthquake in Haiti, they reacted immediately in support of and in solidarity with the victims. One of the mothers was in tears of joy after hearing her son reporting on the radio. The teachers invested in the project, each one in accordance with his/her capacity, and all benefitted. The local community renewed its confidence in the school.

Pedagogical value

Following their exchange with specialists from Montserrat, the young people had less apprehension about eruptions. They understood better what to do in case they occur – all part of citizenship education. By having contact with people with another language and culture, students became more aware that even if not completely fluent in the other language one can still benefit immensely from such contacts. This project also helped to eliminate an inferiority complex that some students in technical and vocational schools had vis-à-vis students in general high schools. It made them proud of both their studies and their school.

“This event enabled me to encounter my former history teacher from a general high school who congratulated me on my English and my class work. It was the first time I was congratulated to be in a technical school. It was enriching to meet other people from the Caribbean who adapt to natural disasters – it makes one feel stronger in relation to nature.”

Kenny Hatchi, a 17-year-old boy

Contribution to the quality of education

Effective learning requires curiosity, as does intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, fostering intercultural dialogue provides an affective dimension to learning which goes beyond cognitive or academic learning. Emphasis is placed on communication, oral expression, attitudes and interpersonal skills, which are vital ingredients for learning throughout life.

Keys for success

- Detailed preparations and complete project implementation
- Team work and good contacts with other schools
- A climate of confidence
- Recognition of and compensation for students
- Involvement of families
- Involvement of the media
- Adequate follow-up

You can do it too!

Many countries are faced with the threat of natural disasters. In recent years there was an oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico, volcanic eruptions in Iceland and Indonesia, flooding in Pakistan and Australia, an earthquake in Haiti and a tsunami in Japan.

Students need to be aware of what action should be taken in case of such disasters and if possible learn measures to help to prevent them from occurring. By establishing contact and meaningful exchanges with a school in a country facing similar threats, students can become more knowledgeable and better prepared to deal with such possibilities.

“I worked the whole weekend with my mother to prepare the live presentation I was to give on the radio. During my intervention I was so nervous that a lady from Montserrat held me by the shoulder. It is good to be afraid and then succeed.”

Marius Barlagne, a 16-year-old boy

Remember to observe the 13th October, International Day for Disaster Reduction.

Jordan

School:
Naifa Secondary School –
public secondary

City:
Amman

Project Coordinator:
Ms Eman Al-Shoubaki

Two dialogue projects in Jordan: on climate change with Denmark and on cultural exchange with Italy

Background

Naifa Secondary School was keen to involve students in developing intercultural dialogue while addressing a world concern of significant importance. It therefore accepted an invitation from ASPnet Demark to send a delegation of students to attend a meeting on climate change held by a school in Copenhagen in December in 2010. In addition, they exchanged with a school in Italy.

Project participants

The principal, one teacher and 50 students.

Project objectives

- To develop awareness about climate change and water needs and availability in Jordan and to develop an exchange between students in Jordan and Denmark
- To develop and document a cultural dialogue between students in Jordan and in Italy

Project implementation

The Climate Change Project: In preparation for their school's participation in the climate conference in Denmark, students conducted extensive research about climate issues and challenges facing Jordan such as air pollution, the greenhouse effect, increased temperatures, lower rainfall, water scarcity and deforestation. They undertook research and conducted interviews about Jordan's Water Strategy for 2007-2022. Possible solutions were sought and considered such as a more rational use of water, alternative energy sources including solar and wind power and recycling and clean-up campaigns. The students produced, distributed and displayed leaflets and posters transmitting messages on how to use water wisely. During their stay in Copenhagen student members of the Jordanian delegation not only attended the conference but were able to dialogue with people from many different parts of the world.

The Cultural Dialogue Project: The school established partnership with the Liceo da Procida School in Salerno, Italy. Students in both schools maintained fruitful exchanges and dialogue about each other's countries that resulted in the production of a joint magazine entitled "Unforgettable People in East and West". The magazine presents scientists, philosophers, inventors and discoverers from Jordan, the Arab states and Italy who have made significant contributions to civilization. Students researched various facets of history and their respective cultures. Their principal communication was online through e-mail and videoconferencing.

Challenges encountered

Some expenses were involved in producing the joint magazine but the school principal helped with fundraising. Finding extra time for joint projects was also a factor, so some activities were conducted during breaks or after lessons.



Desertification © Mirella Saldari

Skills acquired

In conducting research about both Jordan's history, customs and traditions related to their Italian counterparts, in addition to climate change, students improved their speaking, writing and reading skills. They also developed their capacity to use a range of online tools more effectively.

Changes in attitude

Students became more open-minded and respected the views of others in spite of cultural differences. They became interested in finding similarities between cultures and were especially keen to correct stereotypes and cultural misconceptions.

Project results

- Effective participation in the climate change meeting in Copenhagen
- Production of a joint publication presenting the respective cultures of participating students
- A CD-ROM containing highlights of the two projects

Impact of the project

Students demonstrated a grasp of broader perspectives and an increase in self-confidence. The school principal became wholly involved which greatly facilitated participation in the two projects. Families lent their support, notably those whose students travelled to Copenhagen. The local media reported on the activities which contributed to the impact of the exchange at the local level.

Pedagogical value

Taking part in dialogue with young people from other countries also helped to build teamwork and self-esteem.

Contribution to the quality of education

Intercultural dialogue helps to encourage mutual understanding and open minds. Intercultural learning plays an important role in elucidating misconceptions regarding other cultures and in eliminating stereotypes and prejudice. The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has become indispensable for ensuring frequent and effective intercultural dialogues and is a necessary and essential feature of quality education.

"I participated in the meeting in Copenhagen. It was a great experience. I learned so many useful things about climate change and how we can stop this problem. I participated in presenting Jordan's vision towards climate change and Jordan's water strategy 2007-2022."

Noor Nail Alayan, a 17-year-old girl

Keys for success

- Explaining the benefits of intercultural dialogue to the students
- Formation of teams/working groups of students, each one having specific roles and responsibilities
- Effective use of the Internet

You can do it too!

Every year international organizations such as the UN and UNESCO organize major conferences on vital issues. Although it is usually not possible to attend intergovernmental conferences, webcasts provide an excellent opportunity for schools to follow debates and organize discussions on corresponding agenda items. The UN Cyber Schoolbus (<http://cyberschoolbus.un.org/>) suggests current issues to discuss and debate. Through ASPnet a partnership can be established with a school in another country to exchange views and ideas on topics under review. Information on how these issues affect each other's respective countries can be compared in order to deepen intercultural dialogue.

Remember to observe 5 June, World Environment Day
and 24 October, United Nations Day.

Oman Euro-Arab Network for Sustainability

School:
**Fatma Bint Qais –
public secondary school**

City:
Ibri

Project Coordinator:
Ms Mona Al Ghareebi

Background

In November 2008, Oman hosted an ASPnet Interregional Conference on Euro-Arab Partnerships for Sustainability. As a result of this encounter, a project involving teachers and students from both Oman and Germany was conceptualized and conducted.

Project participants

Teachers and their students (aged between 15 and 18) in both countries.

Project objectives

- To become acquainted with each other and traditions in both Oman and Germany
- To learn the basics of each other's language
- To learn more about global concerns such as the importance of water conservation and biodiversity, and to take appropriate action

Project implementation

This project involved a wide range of topics, starting with the vital resource of water. Research was conducted on issues facing both countries related to water and the need to protect biodiversity. Students prepared questionnaires and conducted interviews with specialists. They created flyers, posters, drawings and poetry to express both aesthetic and scientific aspects of the topics under study. Research findings were exchanged and discussed. Students also shared information on their respective cultures, traditions, important holidays and festivities. For example, Omani students described in detail the celebration of the "Eid", the religious celebration at the end of the Muslim Ramadan period of fasting. The "Eid" lasts several days and during which special meals and sweets are prepared and visits are made to families and friends. They sent their photos of dishes being prepared for this occasion.

Challenges encountered

There were a few practical obstacles, but involvement of parents and the media helped to overcome them.



Sending and receiving resource material
from a partner school
© Fatma Bint Qais School/ASPnet Oman

Skills acquired

Many improvements were made in reading, writing, listening and speaking. English was used as a lingua franca for communication between the two countries. Students learned to work in project teams and acquired intercultural communication skills.

Changes in attitude

The project generated a climate of harmony and peace both within and between the two participating schools and raised the students' awareness about sustainability.

Project results

- Students learned to "think globally and act locally"
- Increased action in support of water conservation and in protecting the environment

Impact of the project

Students' learning motivation was largely enhanced and their interest and appreciation in another culture was increased.

Pedagogical value

Education should be relevant to the needs and concerns of young people both locally and globally. This project had a double value: it provided a fruitful intercultural dialogue and a platform for mobilizing youth to reflect and take action to preserve water sources and ecosystems.

Contribution to the quality of education

The study of global issues should be an inherent part of intercultural learning. Focusing on the needs and the real lives of the students contributes directly to quality education.

Keys for success

- Relevance to the needs and interests of students
- Stimulates creativity
- Encourages innovation

You can do it too!

In planning an intercultural dialogue with a school in another part of the world, work with your partners to choose a topic of global concern and interest. Most countries are faced with the issue of the rational use of water and the need to protect biodiversity. While dealing with such concerns, students in both countries deepen their knowledge and commitment to take action locally but also achieve a broader vision of how these challenges are tackled elsewhere. Young people also understand better the cultural context of the country under study and the intrinsic link between culture and the environment.



Omani students learn about their partner country
© Fatma Bint Qais School/ASPnet Oman

"This project is interesting and useful and helped me to learn more about German culture and to introduce my country, Oman. I improved my language skills in English and also I learned some German. I suggest exchange visits as the next step. Also, adding other countries to the project so that our generation develops with open minds and lives in harmony with others."

Eman Al Shmeli, a 17-year-old girl

Remember to observe 22 March, World Water Day.

Trinidad and Tobago

School:
St. George's College –
public secondary school

City:
Barataria

Project Coordinator:
Ms Gail Ganpat

Water for Survival

Background

Students and teachers from the Costa Blanca Skole (White Coast School) in Alicante, Spain visited the International Exhibition Water and Sustainable Development 2008 in Zaragoza, Spain where they attended a number of presentations. Upon visiting the Trinidad and Tobago Pavilion, they were keen to establish a partnership on the subject of water with a school in this Caribbean country.

Project participants

Teachers from different disciplines: Languages, Social Studies, Geography, History and Science, and their students (aged from 15 to 19).

Project objectives

- To forge a meaningful partnership between a school in Spain and a school in Trinidad and Tobago
- To exchange and share information on water issues faced by each country and identify ways to preserve this vital natural resource

Project implementation

An interdisciplinary approach was taken to examine the question of the use and conservation of water in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition to incorporating this topic into several subjects in the curriculum, two field visits were made to the Water and Sewerage Authority which is responsible for all aspects of water collection, purification, and distribution in the country. In March 2009 a group of 14 students, accompanied by their teachers, travelled to Alicante, Spain on the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea in order to present their findings to their Spanish counterparts and to learn more about the issue of water in a European country. In February 2010, a group of students and teachers from Alicante paid a return visit to their counterparts in the Caribbean. They were eager to see for themselves the effects of the dry season on the environment and to pursue their dialogue. Their visit coincided with the annual Carnival – and Trinidad and Tobago have one of the biggest in the world.

Challenges encountered

Some students had difficulties obtaining passports for travel to Europe but the National Commission for UNESCO provided support and this issue was overcome. It was also challenging to raise sufficient funds for the journey abroad but the school community helped out.

Skills acquired

Students learned how to conduct research by taking notes, preparing and conducting interviews with specialists and collecting and analysing information. They became competent in the use of Power Point presentations and gained confidence in speaking in front of an audience. Leadership skills were developed; teachers became facilitators which enabled the students to be the prime actors. Students learned about effective fund-raising, essential to any project. The Spanish students also improved their English language capacity.



Students from Trinidad&Tobago and Spain established a partnership
© St. George's College, Barataria/ASPnet
Trinidad&Tobago

Changes in attitude

Both the Spanish and Trinbagonian students arrived in each other's country with preconceived ideas. They all admitted that after living with each other they rejected stereotypes and became more tolerant of difference.

Project results

- Reciprocal study visits: Trinbagonian students and teachers travelled to Spain and Spanish students and teachers travelled to Trinidad and Tobago
- Acceptance and appreciation of diversity and a commitment to respect the environment and to promote the conservation of water
- Interest in planning a return trip to Spain. Students studying French also expressed interest in establishing links with a school in France

Impact of the project

All stakeholders (students, teachers, school authorities) reported that the project had a positive impact on class and school dynamics. The media published reports on the project which also generated interest from other schools and the community.

Pedagogical value

The educational value of participating in study outside of the classroom is clearly of great benefit. This project confirmed that students are keen to go on excursions and trips. The fact that they were going to be invited to make a presentation to the school in Spain proved to be very motivating for them and they were keen to undertake the necessary work to make a good presentation. They also showed imagination and creativity in selecting cultural artefacts to share with their Spanish peers. The project led to many positive changes in students. Not only did they learn more about their own country but they learned to appreciate another culture. Students forged strong ties with their host families in Alicante (2009) and with their Spanish guests (2010). They learned that in spite of cultural differences, human nature is essentially the same everywhere.

"I learned to live with other people and to study a different culture. I observed the ways of life of other people and the differences between Alicante and Trinidad."

Amanda Bermudez, a 17-year-old girl

Contribution to the quality of education

Intercultural skills are not only important but necessary for young people in today's global environment. Intercultural skills help foster more broadminded attitudes and the acceptance of others.

Keys for success

- Considerable support granted from the school administration and in particular from the principal and vice-principal
- Active involvement of other members of staff and parents
- Funding from the school community
- Good organization of all stages of the project and a respected timetable
- Constant contact maintained with the personnel of the partner school

You can do it too!

Water is a universal concern and relevant to all societies and an essential element of sustainable development. It has become urgent to raise awareness among young people of the need for good water management. By establishing a partnership with a school in another country, students not only deepen their knowledge and awareness of this vital commodity but learn at the same time, about the values, customs and culture of their peers elsewhere. Although travelling to another country is expensive, this project shows that highly motivated students manage to raise funds in support of their travel. Reciprocal visits with stays in host families also reduce expenses and provide deeper cultural insights.

Remember to observe 22 March, World Water Day.

United Kingdom (UK) in collaboration with Malawi

Schools:
St. Peter's Church of England Aided
School (UK) in collaboration
with All Saints CDS School,
Mtunthama, Malawi –
public secondary schools

City:
Exeter, Devon

Project Coordinator:
Mr Andrew Hubbard (UK) and
Mr Kennedy Kampambe
(Malawi)

The impact and effects of HIV and AIDS on local communities in Malawi

Background

Health education is a vital area in school curricula worldwide. HIV and AIDS is one of the most pressing health issues facing young people today. Malawi is no exception where some 11% of the population is affected and the majority of HIV infections occur among young people, particularly those between the ages of 13 and 24. Therefore, in Malawi, HIV and AIDS is a core subject in the curriculum.

Project participants

Some 1,000 students and their teachers in the UK and some 320 students in Malawi as well as two teachers and medical staff.

Project objectives

- To enable students in the UK to gain an understanding of HIV and AIDS, particularly its causes and its impact in African communities
- To allow students in Malawi to discuss the impact of HIV on their own society while allowing students in the UK to develop a better understanding of this issue through learning about personal stories

Project implementation

This project was one of four modules within the framework of a course on International Studies. The school has an on-going exchange with Malawi. Once students had chosen the topic of HIV and AIDS, they researched on the web, brainstormed, reviewed relevant source material and took part in discussion groups. Direct exchanges were arranged with Malawian students via videoconferencing, mobile phones and e-mail. Together they developed educational resource materials presenting important messages on HIV and AIDS and discussed preventive measures to halt the spread of the virus.

Challenges encountered

Communication between the two countries was not always easy due to electrical shortages and poor reception for mobile phones in Malawi. However, with perseverance, contact was maintained via phones and computers several times a week.

Skills acquired

Students made effective use of ICT.

Changes in attitude

The students from both schools developed a better understanding for each other and an appreciation of the similarities between them. Besides, the awareness and comprehension of the problems which some of them face because of HIV/AIDS grew.

Project results

- Youth-orientated messages on HIV and AIDS
- A comparative study of the impact of HIV and AIDS on communities in the UK and in Malawi

Impact of the project

This project is part of an on-going exchange between the two schools and hence the impact remains strong, particularly on those students and teachers who visited each other in both countries. The media covered the project thereby raising awareness of the issue in the community in general.

Pedagogical value

Students gained awareness and practical knowledge concerning HIV and AIDS. Through the intercultural exchange, they were also able to understand better and appreciate different cultures and moral codes.

Contribution to the quality of education

The frequent use of mobile phones was a special feature of this project which greatly enhanced direct communication between students and teachers in the United Kingdom and Malawi, and contributed to deeper understanding of each other.

"Students need to understand and appreciate how people in other parts of the world live, to see the similarities and differences between them. This is particularly important for students who live in areas which are not very multi-cultural (such as Devon) and they also need to better appreciate each other's cultures and moral expectations."

Mr Andrew Hubbard, Project Coordinator

Keys for success

- Reliable links with the partner school and a personal link between teachers
- Frequent communication with the partner school
- Integration of the project within the curriculum, ensuring that it is taken seriously by students in both schools
- Modest aims



Students from Malawi and the UK developed educational resource materials on HIV and AIDS
© St. Peter's Church of England Aided School/ASPnet UK

You can do it too!

Although long distance-telephone calls on mobile phones remain, for the most part, costly, Internet telephony is free and can save considerable time. Direct contact with students, teachers and experts in another part of the world is both stimulating and rewarding. This project showed how mobile phones can become useful classroom tools. Health-related issues are of importance to young people and can serve as useful topics for intercultural learning. Furthermore, once an effective project has been conducted with another school abroad it can pave the way for other meaningful projects.

Remember to observe 7 April, World Health Day and 1 December, World AIDS Day.

2. A foundation for social inclusion



For peace to be achieved at the international level, it must be ensured at both the local and national level. Demographic changes and migration are having enormous impacts on populations.

In order to strengthen democracy, education systems and schools need to consider the multicultural character of society, and aim to positively contribute to peaceful coexistence and positive interaction between different cultural groups.

The UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education (2006) make an important distinction between multicultural education and intercultural education:

“Multicultural education uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance, or at least tolerance, of these cultures. Intercultural Education aims to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different cultural groups.”

Intercultural dialogue is concerned with the need to ensure social, economic and cultural inclusion for all within a given society. This approach is found in the following examples from UNESCO Associated Schools in three different regions which have found practical and effective ways to foster meaningful collaboration and reciprocal exchanges between young people and minority groups from other cultures living in local communities, whether migrant workers in the Republic of Korea, asylum-seekers in Switzerland or new citizens in the United States. Students engaged in work experience and volunteering initiatives which took the form of development of educational materials or documentary-making, while artistic expression (storytelling, art and drama) also played an important part.

Republic of Korea

School:
Wonhwa Girls' High School –
private secondary school for girls

City:
Daegu

Project Coordinator:
Ms Wonho Kim

Towards and beyond globalization

Background

This school is located in an industrial area where many families of migrant workers reside. Some two per cent of the population in the country is non-Korean, representing approximately 1,200,000 people. The number is expected to rise to 2.9 million in 2020. The Principal has always been interested in developing community-oriented activities and the school was selected as a “model school” to promote education for international understanding between 2005 and 2006.

Project participants

Students aged between 16 and 18 years old, teachers and the principal.

Project objectives

- To foster cooperation between students and local migrant workers
- To provide work experience and volunteering initiatives
- To incorporate intercultural learning in school curricula
- To develop more creative and student-centred educational methods and materials

Project implementation

The school has been actively involved in a number of initiatives directly linked to promoting intercultural learning both within and outside the classroom. For example, in close cooperation with the Daegu Missionary Centre for Migrant Workers, students visited the Centre every Sunday for 16 weeks. They distributed lunch, cleaned the cafeteria and taught Korean to migrant workers. Such a project enabled students to interact with local immigrants and to apply their experiences in the school curriculum. They gained a precious opportunity to eliminate negative preconceptions and develop an outlook that values diversity and mutual understanding. A World Geography class was added to the curricula as a required subject to help students increase their knowledge of other countries including those of the local migrant workers. Ties were also established with partner schools in both Japan and Malaysia which involved travel and home stays with families. A radio programme featuring intercultural dialogue was initiated with a local broadcasting station (SCN FM). The school also promoted the UNESCO Cross-Cultural Awareness Programme (CCAP-UNESCO).

Challenges encountered

Secondary education in the Republic of Korea is largely geared towards competitive university entrance exams which leave little time in curricula for intercultural learning. However, the introduction of the compulsory course on World Geography met with much enthusiasm and provided a valuable forum for dialogue and exchange. Furthermore, special certificates of participation are granted in order to compensate and motivate students to take part in intercultural dialogue-related activities and volunteer work. Communicating in different languages can also be a challenge. The school has therefore hired some additional non-national teachers to improve foreign language proficiency and intercultural learning.

Skills acquired

Students developed creativity, social skills, self-esteem, more confidence, leadership and a sense of hospitality. Communication, language and interpersonal skills also greatly improved.

Changes in attitude

By interacting with migrant workers, students realized how much both groups had in common. To this day, they continue to keep in touch with their new friends and no longer look at migrant workers from a distance, but with empathy. Foreign travel to sister schools in Japan and Malaysia reinforced this open-mindedness.

Project results

- Radio programmes on multiculturalism
- Publication on multiculturalism entitled Building a Better World Together
- A website presenting activities on a wide range of topics including, human rights, tolerance, the rights of migrant workers and multicultural children, cultural diversity, and the World Cup
- A documentary on the school's radio programmes on intercultural education was broadcast by MBC-TV national television
- Based on their participation in the project some students made new career choices, e.g. one girl originally wanted to become a lawyer but now hopes to work for an international organization such as UNESCO



Students from the Japanese partner school in full regalia
© Wonhwa Girls' High School/ASPnet
Republic of Korea

Impact of the project

The project positively demonstrated that the school and community could work together effectively. The attitudes of students, parents and school staff evolved and strong links were made with local foreigners as well as with partner schools abroad.

Pedagogical value

Community-oriented projects provide an invaluable forum for direct contact and exchanges between students and other populations (in this case, workers) and create strong links between the school and society. Experiential learning as advocated through this project makes the necessary connection between experience and knowledge. When students are at the centre of their own learning they gain not only a better understanding of other cultures but also confidence and new attitudes and behaviour.

Contribution to the quality of education

Intercultural learning helps to change perceptions, challenge prejudices and break down negative stereotypes – extremely necessary in this era of globalization.

"We were grouped into four teams and each one made a radio programme devoted to multiculturalism. We all did research, worked on the script, made interviews and recorded the programme at SCN radio station. I felt very proud and will not forget this experience which was reported on the local public TV station."

Yoon Jieui, an 18-year-old girl

Keys for success

- The principal's strong interest and commitment to community-based activities with local immigrants
- The active participation of teachers in developing innovative programmes
- A climate conducive to multicultural education both in the curriculum and throughout the school
- Sustainability – intercultural learning is not an occasional project but an on-going process
- Close collaboration with migrant workers yields benefits to both them and to students

"During the exchange with our sister school in Malaysia, I learned much more than I had ever imagined. I was astonished by how readily they accept foreign cultures while preserving their own. I hope I can have more opportunities like this trip to Malaysia to learn more about other countries and improve my thoughts and values."

Lee Dabok, a 17-year-old girl

You can do it too!

Solidarity projects in support of local minority groups can often be facilitated by co-operating with appropriate NGOs or government bodies. Do not lose any time, contact them now. By providing incentives and recognition for volunteer work students' efforts can be compensated. In order to achieve a multiplier effect, it is important to disseminate information on initiatives taken in support of intercultural learning so as to inspire others to take similar action. Radio still plays a major role in many societies and schools can use such media to inform their communities on their projects and on their results. Television and print media can also cover initiatives.

Remember to observe 18 December, International Day for Migrants.

Legends coming from elsewhere for meeting people here

Background

Switzerland, like other countries, receives immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. The provision of intercultural dialogue, education and training for young people whose families have come from different parts of the world is indispensable for ensuring their integration in society and for offering them a secure future. The School has a special project for newly arrived young adolescents, the Classe Jeunes en Transit (JET) which offers languages training and education for young migrants, including undocumented ones. In the context of this class, an activity was initiated which would help young people to learn French, gain more self-worth and provide them with fruitful contacts with their new community.

Project participants

Young people in transition, aged between 16 and 18 years old, coming from Angola, China, Colombia, Portugal and Turkey; teachers of language, art and theatre.

Project objectives

- To promote intercultural dialogue and facilitate social integration within the community through storytelling, art and drama
- To make the cultures of young immigrants more widely known and understood

Project implementation

The immigrant students were invited to select, or create, a legend or story depicting their origin, culture and customs. They obtained useful resource material for their legends from public libraries, the school's multimedia centre and the Internet. Upon completion of their stories, they worked on how best they could present them, through drama. They visited a nearby pre-school in order to perform a selection of the legends for pupils aged between five and seven. The next stage of the project entailed making illustrations of the respective stories for inclusion in an art exhibition. The students were at the centre of all of the preparations e.g. producing a flyer for the invitation to the opening of the exhibition, preparing a welcome speech, planning a buffet for guests, etc. They selected the 'House of Associations' (La Maison des Associations) for the display of legends, which brings together a wide range of people such as parents of children with special educational needs, retired people and job-seekers.

Challenges encountered

Due to the transitional nature of the participant class, student turnover was high, which raised some problems of continuity. It was therefore necessary to identify specific tasks for each one and to take appropriate action so that student departures would not affect teamwork, and also enable each student to play an important role in aspects of the implementation of the project.

Skills acquired

Students found an outlet to share and demonstrate their creativity and acquired skills in teamwork and the organization and management of a public event. They gained self-confidence and improved their proficiency in the French language – an important factor for integration.

Switzerland

School:
Centre Professionnel du Littoral
Neuchâtelois –
public secondary
technical and vocational school

City:
Neuchâtel

Project Coordinator:
Mr Pascal Helle



Illustrations by students
© Centre Professionnel du Littoral
Neuchâtelois/ASPnet Switzerland

Changes in attitude

The students developed a greater curiosity about and appreciation of other cultures.

Project results

- An effective intercultural and intergenerational dialogue
- The composition of illustrated stories and legends from different cultures and their enactment

Impact of the project

The principal of the school supported the project and many teachers attended the inauguration of the exhibition. The families of the immigrant students also came to the exhibition and children in the community recognized and greeted the students who had presented the drama performances at the local school. The media (local radio and daily press) provided good coverage thereby facilitating community learning about this innovative project. Following an article in the newspaper, a resource person from a writing workshop contacted the school and proposed a new project for the class of young people in transit.

Pedagogical value

This was a coherent project which put the students at the centre of both creativity and organizational arrangements. It served as both an inter-generational and an intercultural bridge linking a technical and professional school with a pre-school and fostering contact with young people from around the world with local children.

Contribution to the quality of education

This project reached out to one of the most vulnerable segments of society and enabled them to contribute to the quality of education by using their own cultural backgrounds. The immigrant students were not only prime actors but they actually became teachers and shared their culture, values and lifestyles with the local population. Education in this instance prepares young people to play responsible roles in a multicultural society.

"I wrote out a legend as well as a scenario for its presentation. The children liked it very much. I wondered sometimes if we would ever succeed in our endeavour but finally everything turned out well."

Léon Kivanga, an 18-year-old boy

Keys for success

- Clear goals
- A solid team of teachers
- A flexible timetable
- A commitment on behalf of all the participants
- External endorsement of the project (visitors, media coverage, etc.)

You can do it too!

Storytelling is often thought of as an activity for very young people. However, this project clearly shows that adolescents, as well as young adults, can become very involved and gain much from preparing and presenting stories deriving from their cultures, and presenting them to young children and other members of society. The approach is relatively simple and the benefits for all are enormous!

Remember to observe 20 February, World Day of Social Justice and
21 May, World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

Becoming a citizen – Naturalization Ceremony

Background

It is difficult to teach a homogenous school population about other countries and cultures using only textbooks and videos. One teacher was keen to find a way to enable her students to meet people from different parts of the world in order to appreciate diversity, explore history and culture and become more tolerant. A unique opportunity arose when she was invited by a friend to attend her naturalization ceremony to become a citizen of the United States of America. The event gave her an extraordinary idea. After consulting her school, she contacted the federal court system asking if they would hold their next nationalization ceremony at her school. They accepted, and two years later over eighty people from thirty-six countries became U.S. citizens on the school premises. Since then, the experience has been repeated.

Project participants

Some 600 students, aged between 11 to 14 years old, all teachers, some 12 people from the federal court system and immigration services and about 85 new citizens and their guests.

Project objectives

- To promote intercultural dialogue, respect, acceptance, and tolerance and eliminate stereotypes
- To better understand citizenship and inspire more active and responsible citizens at the local, national and global levels
- To understand the process of acquiring citizenship
- To become familiar with World Heritage sites located in countries of new citizens
- To promote cross-generational dialogue

Project implementation

The project, which is on-going, requires three main phases: i) preparation; ii) naturalization ceremony; and iii) follow-up. Preparations include both substance and logistics and take about six months including a special four-week unit of study for the adequate preparation of students. Young people are asked a series of questions to reflect on such issues as how to define an immigrant and what qualities are needed for active citizenship. Students are then given the same test that immigrants have to take to obtain citizenship. They learn the entire process for becoming an American citizen. They hold meetings with local federal court staff to discuss all necessary arrangements for the naturalization ceremony on the school grounds and foresee sufficient space as well as the corresponding infrastructure for the event and the necessary inventory, such as table, chairs, microphones and flags. They also plan and organize a reception to follow the ceremony. The school obtains the list of countries of origin of the immigrants. Each class is then assigned a country to study in-depth. Students learn about the country's history, government, geography, culture, food and World Heritage sites; if there are no sites inscribed yet, students recommend possible ones. Two weeks before the ceremony is held, the school sends invitations to the media. Great care is

United States of America

School:
Three Rivers Middle School –
public secondary school

City:
Cleveland, Ohio

Project Coordinator:
Ms Marney Murphy



Students witness the naturalization of over 500 U.S. citizens
© Three Rivers Middle School/ASPnet USA

taken in making the final arrangements, in view of its importance and the fact that it is a federal governmental event. A mock ceremony is held the day before to make sure that everything is in order, including the audio system. Students play the role of federal authorities and new citizens and the overall timing of the ceremony is noted.

On the day of the ceremony, the entire school attends and the school band and choir make a special performance in honour of the newly proclaimed citizens. A keynote speaker is invited and a selection of the new citizens is asked to explain what their new citizenship means to them. During the reception students engage in discussions and dialogue with their new fellow citizens. The ceremony is webcast so that relatives and friends in other parts of the world and other interested parties can view the event. As part of the follow-up, students write thank-you letters to court officials and to the new citizens. Students, faculty and the community are asked to provide feedback in order to continue to improve and enhance all features of future ceremonies.

Challenges encountered

No specific problems were encountered. At first there was a concern that new citizens might not want to come to a school for such an important ceremony. However, many of them had never been to a public school and they felt that it made the day even more memorable.

Skills acquired

Young people developed a wide range of organizational and research skills and improved their capacity to strike up conversations with people from different origins.

Changes in attitude

Students are now less likely to judge a person based on their looks, dress or ability to speak their language. They are keen to learn more about their own heritage and dialogue with their respective families. Young people have become more aware and interested in global events and what is happening in the world.

Project results

- The planning and conduct of further naturalization ceremonies for new citizens at the Three Rivers Middle School
- Increased appreciation of citizenship along with its corresponding duties and responsibilities
- Tolerance and appreciation for diversity

Impact of the project

The entire process for preparing and conducting the ceremony makes a powerful and lasting impact on students who refer to it many times in subsequent class discussions and essays. Even after they have left school, former students often ask if the ceremonies are still being held. They comment on how the event helped them to realize that they were a part of a larger world. Many students share their insights ("I rooted for Brazil during the Olympic Games because of the guy I met at the naturalization ceremony"). Furthermore, if a natural disaster strikes a country, students are now the first to initiate relief. The ceremony has even resulted in career choices i.e. two former students have become U.S. marshals (law enforcement service).

Pedagogical value

The project is multifaceted and based on an interdisciplinary approach. Teachers use the naturalization ceremony throughout the school year to reinforce various concepts relating to intercultural dialogue such as understanding globalization, interest in world concerns and developing cultural awareness.

"The naturalization ceremony promotes pride in one's school and in one's country. The students are so proud to talk about their school and to learn about another person's culture. They carry that dialogue with them for the rest of their lives."

Ms Marney Murphy, Project Coordinator

Contribution to the quality of education

Meeting people from other countries and engaging a dialogue with them at school provides purpose in the classroom and helps to eliminate stereotypes and ignorance.

Keys for success

- Enthusiasm
- Efficient organization
- Determination
- Understanding/compassion
- Flexibility
- Good relationships and coordination with local authorities

You can do it too!

The process of becoming a citizen of the host country is often a long one. By hosting naturalization ceremonies at schools, students become interested in the lives and origin of the new citizens, take pride in their country and develop empathy and solidarity. This project has led to the conduct of naturalization ceremonies in other schools in the Cincinnati area and become part of a grassroots movement to have such events held outside courtrooms – in schools or in other welcoming public places. Educators from Sweden and England have expressed interest in adapting it to their respective countries. Maybe you would like to explore such an initiative!

Remember to observe

21 March, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

and 20 June, World Day for Refugees.

**3. Remembering the past,
to understand the present and
to prepare a better future**



Slave Market Memorial,
Stone Town, Zanzibar
© UNESCO/Livia Saldari

We have seen how intercultural dialogue consists of reaffirming cultural identity on the one hand, as well as the quest of learning about and understanding other cultures on the other. Intercultural education which addresses historical injustice can be greatly enriched by intercultural dialogue. The process has three dimensions: learning about the past to better understand the present and to secure a more peaceful future. In other words, in order to prevent past tragedies and atrocities from ever occurring again, one cannot ignore them but rather, learn about them, keep them in memory and take action to prevent them from recurring. While observing the demands on school curricula to reinforce science and technology education at the risk of reducing teaching time for history and the humanities, UNESCO maintains that teaching the lessons of history is fundamental to establishing respect for human rights, basic freedoms and the values of tolerance and mutual respect. For example, the Organization allows institutions, teachers and students to access resources on Education for Holocaust Remembrance to transmit the memory of the Holocaust to future generations so as to prevent genocide from occurring again.

The following three good practices consist of journeys back to the past, specifically in the context of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) Education Project, both in its global scope and in the case of two specific exchanges involving study tours between regions (Portugal/Cape Verde) and within one region (Togo/ Benin).

Intercultural Dialogues for “Breaking the Silence” – The ASPnet Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) Education Project

The Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) Education Project is one of the most innovative and highest-impact projects launched within the framework of ASPnet. It seeks to develop new and effective ways to learn about the causes, consequences and legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in schools on both sides of the Atlantic while developing triangular dialogues between teachers and students in the three regions concerned (Africa, the Americas and Europe).

Conducted in close co-operation with the Slave Route Project, coordinated by the UNESCO Culture Sector, the project shed light on how to overcome taboos and better understand the present by learning about the past. Assessments of activities and encounters revealed that the project had a great impact on both learners and teachers. They not only learned about the scope and depth of the trade, its consequences on the African continent, the enrichment of Europe and the inhuman conditions slaved underwent, but also the enormous contributions of Africans towards the development of the Americas in agriculture, architecture, fishing, transport, traditional medicine, music, art and cuisine. Most importantly, attitudes, perceptions and feelings changed and evolved. Tributes were paid to the efforts and sacrifices of enslaved people and to the abolition movement. The need to combat modern forms of slavery was also addressed.

The TST Project led to the development of new educational resources and creative approaches and facilitated exchanges between teachers, students and decision-makers, from regional training seminars and youth encounters to the first ever symposium on teaching about the TST at secondary-school level. Approximately 25



Handcuffs © Mirella Saldari

Participating regions: Africa

(Angola, Benin, The Gambia, Ghana,
Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal)

Latin America and the Caribbean

(Barbados, Brazil, Cuba, Dominican
Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and
Tobago)

Europe and North America

(Denmark, France, Netherlands,
Norway, Portugal, Spain, United
Kingdom, United States of America)

such meetings across three continents were held, many at symbolic places of memory such as the Island of Gorée, Senegal, New Orleans, United States, and Nantes, France.

On 23 August 2010, twelve years after its launch, the second phase of the ASPnet TST Project commenced following a much-appreciated grant provided to UNESCO by the United States Department of State. Building on former achievements, it forged effective new dialogues between students and teachers from different countries and regions, not only as a contribution to the 2010 International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures but also to the 2011 International Year for People of African Descent.

A two-week online consultation was conducted for interested schools in December 2010. Teachers commented and exchanged views on achievements and challenges in teaching about the TST and provided new ideas for the further development of the project. More than 150 participants shared successful student outcomes, creative approaches, classroom-tested TST educational materials and challenges. Several ideas for future cooperation were generated, including numerous school bilateral and trilateral international partnerships. An online platform comprising short profiles of participating schools and their existing and planned projects was developed to facilitate the exchange.

Building on the outcomes of the online consultation, ASPnet educators shared their knowledge and experience with a wider audience during the Fourth global videoconference for educators on the occasion of the UN International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (25 March). Organized by the UN in collaboration with UNESCO, the event brought together about 200 teachers at UN headquarters in New York with additional groups of educators participating from sites in countries in Africa, Europe and the Americas, and was webcast worldwide.

After committed work throughout the 2010/11 academic year, ASPnet teachers on both sides of the Atlantic met face to face at an International Teacher Professional Development Workshop in Accra, Ghana, in August 2011. Commonalities and differences in approaching the TST informed the discussions, with an overall consensus to promote intercultural dialogue in future school cooperation projects, "I gained a sense of unity with the participants of the workshop", said one participant in the evaluation questionnaire. "I felt that we were all together on the same quest."

"I had such a wonderful time at the ASPnet teacher's three-day seminar in Ghana. I certainly will put the ideas that I have gathered into an excellent project for my school. At least now I have a number of tools and strategies at my disposal that I can use in the classroom when I am teaching the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Even more important though is that I have a number of resource persons in the friends that I have made at the seminar."

Mr Shane Andrews, teacher, Trinidad and Tobago

More information on the ASPnet TST Project:

[http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/networks/global-networks/aspnet/
flagship-projects/transatlantic-slave-trade/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/networks/global-networks/aspnet/flagship-projects/transatlantic-slave-trade/)



"Breaking the Silence" Project in Benin
© UNESCO/Jean O'Sullivan

Sharing a Common History and preserving Biodiversity

Background

At the National ASPnet Meeting held in Lisbon in April 2009, two Portuguese ASPnet school coordinators met with the Secretary-General of the Cape Verde National Commission for UNESCO. They planned a collaborative project based on five centuries of common history. The Portuguese arrived in Cape Verde (located some 400 miles off the coast of Senegal) in the 15th century. From the outset of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST), Africans from Guinea were taken to the islands to work on Portuguese plantations and Cape Verde was used as a supply station and transit during the TST. In 1975, Cape Verde gained its independence. Since 2010 was also declared International Year of Biodiversity, the partners planned to take into account this important issue as well.

Project participants

Principals, 10 teachers and students aged between 17 and 18 years old, City Halls, Portuguese Embassy and Ministry for Higher Education in Cape Verde, members of pedagogical councils and local Portuguese educational authorities.

Project objectives

- To foster intercultural dialogue by learning more about the long shared history between the two countries
- To contribute to the observance of the International Year for Biodiversity, 2010
- To promote peace and goodwill between the people of both countries

Project implementation

In Portugal a subject called "Project Area" allows students to develop a project by themselves with the help of teachers. This project was conducted within this context. Firstly, students from Portugal and Cape Verde established contact with each other via Internet. Secondly, they decided on the main themes for their joint projects relating to their common history including the Transatlantic Slave Trade, respect for human rights and the need to preserve biodiversity. They carried out research on these issues, exchanged their findings and examined the ramifications. A week-long study tour by Portuguese students and teachers to Cape Verde took place in April 2010. Students discussed many issues including the TST, colonization, the biodiversity in both countries and the links between them, i.e. various plants and animals the Portuguese introduced to Cape Verde. Guests and hosts visited places of memory related to the TST and examined the rich local biodiversity, both indigenous and imported. Students and teachers from Cape Verde shared their culture in form of dances, crafts and national dishes with their Portuguese visitors.

Challenges encountered

The main problem was to raise funds for the school trip to Cape Verde. This was solved thanks to fund-raising campaigns in both Portugal and Cape Verde. Parents in Portugal contributed as did the Portuguese Embassy in Cape Verde. Companies and firms in Cape Verde also provided support as did government authorities in both countries.

Portugal in collaboration with Cape Verde

Schools:

Escola Secundaria Dr Ginestal Machado and Escola Secundaria Latino Coelho

in collaboration with Escola Secundaria Pedro Gomes – public secondary schools

Cities:

Santarém and Lamego, Portugal, and Praia, Cape Verde

Project Coordinator:

Ms Maria Alexandra Forte



ASPnet students from Portugal and Cape Verde © ASPnet Portugal

Skills acquired

Students developed competencies that facilitated teamwork and contributed to team spirit. They perfected their ICT skills and through learning by doing they explored the true meaning of intercultural dialogue and its role in a globalized world.

Changes in attitudes

Learning about the TST changed students' attitudes. They particularly recognized the need for the protection of human rights. They now try to respect differences without prejudice. The friendships formed between the young people in Portugal and Cape Verde remain the most significant accomplishment.

Project results

- A study tour by teachers and students to Cape Verde
- Nomination of student Junior Ambassadors for peace and goodwill
- A tangible contribution to the International Year for Biodiversity (2010)

Impact of the project

The project was presented in several schools in Portugal and aroused considerable interest. Students became goodwill ambassadors committed to promoting appreciation for cultural diversity. The regional media in Portugal covered the project as well as national television in Cape Verde. Families, school principals, the local communities and authorities lent their support to the project.

"This project was very interesting because in the past I did not realize that the history of the transatlantic slave trade was so terrible. I began to understand that after I researched the topic... I made new friends and saw the benefits of learning from students from Cape Verde. It was an unforgettable experience, it also helped me to appreciate life and the diversity of animals and plants... I need to respect all cultures and it is wonderful that differences can exist without prejudice."

Claudia Silva, an 18-year-old girl

Pedagogical value

Young people should be taught to respect other cultures in order to eliminate prejudice. Just like cultural diversity, respect for biodiversity is important. This project made a meaningful link between the two and reinforced active citizenship.

Contribution to the quality of education

Intercultural dialogue touches upon a wide range of issues, thereby facilitating interdisciplinarity and holistic learning. Intercultural dialogue also serves as a bridge between the past, present and future.

Keys for success

- A collaborative project conducive to ensuring team work between regions
- Effective use of ICT for international dialogue
- Exchange and analysis of research findings
- Direct contact with the partner school and if possible a visit to the country under study

You can do it too!

This project contributed to the celebration of two important International Years and made a significant link between science and culture. Although these years have both



Making new friends through the project
© ASPnet Portugal

come to an end, equally important follow-up activities continue. 2011 was declared the International Year for People of African Descent, the International Year of Forests and the International Year for Chemistry by the UN General Assembly. In planning follow-up activities to one or both of these years, a contact with a school abroad would be stimulating for conducting research, exchanging findings, carrying out joint activities and study tours. If one country has more resources than the other, additional fund-raising can be conducted as part of the project so as to ensure reciprocal visits.

Remember to observe 22 May, International Day for Biodiversity.

Educating on the Slave Route

Background

Like all West African countries, Togo suffered tremendously from the Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST). Millions of captive African men, women and children were taken across the Atlantic where they were sold into slavery for the development of the Americas. The trade drained Africa of its most precious resources – its people, often in their prime of life.

Project participants

46 students aged between 17 and 23 years old and 14 teachers.

Project objectives

- To make students more aware of the causes and conditions of the slave trade
- To generate empathy for those who were sold into slavery and recognition for their accomplishments
- To comprehend the impact of the exploitation of the African continent on its development

Project implementation

In order to make classroom learning about the Transatlantic Slave Trade more pertinent, a study tour for students and teachers was conducted to neighbouring Benin and to the city of Ouidah. This destination was particularly important since Ouidah was a major slave trading site. Visits were made to places of memory such as the slave route, the 'Tree of Forgetting', the 'Door of No Return', and the memorial in honour of the forced departures. Explanations were given at each stage of the visit and discussion groups were formed so that students could ask questions and debate with their counterparts from Benin.

Challenges encountered

The main problem encountered was financing the school trip to Benin. The students were obliged to make contributions and the school helped out by providing a subsidy.

Skills acquired

Students developed their capacity to engage in dialogue with peers in a neighbouring country and to have fruitful exchanges of knowledge and points of view.

Togo

School:
Lycée de Tokoin –
public secondary school

City:
Lomé

Project Coordinator:
Mr Karka Assou

Changes in attitude

Students developed greater awareness of the conditions and conduct of the TST and became more aware of aspects of common African history.

Project results

- A study tour to a neighbouring country
- The internalization of classroom learning relating to the legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST)

Impact of the project

This project permitted both students and teachers to have a fuller grasp of the realities of the past and their influence on today and to forge ties of solidarity among all concerned.

Pedagogical value

The project made learning about the Transatlantic Slave Trade much more concrete and tangible. In addition to what they had learned in their history textbooks, students were able to better understand their joint past history. Students were able to see for themselves places of memory which had such far-reaching consequences not only on their own society but on many others throughout the African region.

Contribution to the quality of education

The promotion of tolerance, a culture of peace and fraternity among people is indispensable for quality education.

Keys for success

- Well-defined and attainable objectives
- Sound conceptualization, planning and evaluation of the project

"Thanks to this project, I learned a lot. Today I understand certain events that were vague and far away."

Abah Johnson, a 21-year-old girl

You can do it too!

Young people around the world should learn more about the legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade which is still visible today in many forms throughout Africa, the Americas and Europe. By studying about or visiting places of memory, of which a number are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List [Island of Gorée (Senegal); Forts and Castles, Volta Greater Accra (Ghana); National History Park – Citadel Sans Souci (Haiti); Historical Centre of Salvador de Bahia (Brazil); Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City (United Kingdom)], students can be in a better position to understand the far-reaching consequences of the TST and help to combat prejudice, discrimination and modern forms of human trafficking.

Remember to observe

27 January, International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

25 March, International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

23 August, International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

2 December, International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

10 December, Human Rights Day.



A statue on the Slave Route in Ouidah, Benin © UNESCO/Jean O'Sullivan

4. A prerequisite for social cohesion and national reconciliation



Throughout history, few countries and regions have been spared the trauma of invasions, civil wars, dictatorships, inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts. Each century has had its share of wars and conquests. The 20th century not only inherited past hostilities but was also the stage of two world wars, segregation, apartheid, the Holocaust and other genocides. These events have left scars and caused deep divisions within and between a number of countries which must urgently be addressed and eased.

Among some of the most tragic episodes in the history of humanity is the annihilation of indigenous peoples. Not only have entire populations disappeared due to conquests, sickness and diseases but when and where they have survived they often live in conditions of poverty, with high unemployment, high suicide rates, and limited access to quality health care and education.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted in 2007, is intended to protect the collective rights of indigenous peoples to their culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and natural resources.

As the hope for a better tomorrow, young people need to be taught the values of mutual respect, social cohesion, reconciliation and trust in order to contribute to peaceful and prosperous societies. Their education should shed light on the past while providing them with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour required not only to overcome former injustices but also to prevent them from recurring.

The following two projects taken from two different parts of the world (Paraguay in South America and Rwanda in Africa) testify to the commitment of two schools actively engaged in building bridges with cultural groups, to learn from them and appreciate the wealth of knowledge and traditions as well as taking stock of the roots of their respective societies. This is particularly pertinent in Rwanda where students are working to improve the present and to construct a more harmonious future.

Paraguay

School:
Asunción High School –
private secondary school

City:
Asunción

Project Coordinator:
Ms Anastacia Carrillo de Sosa

Cooperating with the indigenous community of Mbya-Guaraní

Background

In most parts of the world, the indigenous population has diminished due to conquest, colonization, occupation and illness, among other factors. These populations have been, and remain, under threat from poverty, conflict, marginalization, climate change, urbanization and dispossession of land. Some indigenous peoples have suffered extinction and where they have survived, live in poor conditions. Yet they were the original inhabitants of our planet and their beliefs, values, customs, and languages are closely tied to their lands and the environment and have considerable cultural relevance.

Their indigenous knowledge is of immeasurable value. In Latin America, some 400 groups of indigenous peoples comprise some 40 to 50 million people, representing 10% of the overall population.

This project was initiated following the visit of one of the teachers to a nearby indigenous community and her desire to share indigenous culture with her students. It is an on-going project based on respect for the cultures of others.

Project participants

Teachers, students, civil society and local/national authorities.

Project objectives

- To learn more about the socio-cultural life of the Mbya-Guaraní indigenous people of Paraguay
- To develop appreciation of indigenous botanical knowledge and traditions, crafts and the roots of the Guarani language
- Foster meaningful cooperation between members of the indigenous community of Cerro Poty and high school students from the capital city Asunción

Project implementation

In the first phase of the project, students were encouraged to conduct research about the Guarani indigenous people including their culture, language and traditional medicine. Secondly, visits were conducted to nearby Mbya-Guaraní communities to see at first hand their living conditions and priority needs. Thirdly, attention then focused on the Cerro Poty community, located some seven kilometres from Asunción, which was set up in 1998 for indigenous people who had lost their land on account of massive deforestation and which greatly affected the members of this community. In the fourth phase, the National Fund for Culture has provided resources to support the crafts produced (mainly wood-carving) by young people from Cerro Poty. Workshop and exhibition rooms allow craftspeople to display and sell their crafts. Such an infrastructure gives the young people of the Mbya-Guaraní community a purpose and means to earn some income. During the fifth phase, the students from Asunción High School first helped to find markets for the crafts, then lent their collaboration in organizing sales of the hand-carved items. They designed posters and communicated information about the sales. Sixthly, the school worked closely with the Centre of Native Cultural Roots in Asunción which provides scholarships and training for indigenous young people. On the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (October 17), students made visits of solidarity to Cerro Poty to organize special games and activities for the children and young people.

This project was largely based on learning by doing and each step of the project was conducted in close collaboration with the indigenous community of Cerro Poty. The approach centred on building respect for others and who they are, rather than what they have. The school also observed the International Day for Indigenous Peoples (August 9) and helped to organize a major Festival of Nations attended by craftspeople from different parts of the country who presented their dances, poetry and music. The project led to fruitful contacts between students and indigenous people.

Challenges encountered

Obstacles were overcome by concentrating on the attainment of objectives and involving young people and families in seeking strategies to solve eventual problems. The economic support provided by the government through the National Fund for Culture greatly facilitated the running of the project.



Visiting a Mbya-Guaraní community in Paraguay © Asunción High School/ ASPnet Paraguay

Skills acquired

Students learned by doing and developed teamwork and a team spirit as well as organizational and management skills.

Changes in attitude

The changes in attitudes and behaviour were considerable: students who initially were not at all interested became the most active in supporting the project, and are now open towards and fascinated by indigenous culture.

Project results

- Identification and appreciation of the indigenous roots of Paraguay and the affirmation of identity and citizenship of a bilingual country
- Direct contributions towards promoting the sale of indigenous crafts and actions of solidarity in support of indigenous families
- Consciousness that each culture has its own wealth and that one culture is not superior to another

"The production and the sale of crafts increased thanks to the publicity provided by our school. Such a contribution helped to improve the living conditions of the indigenous people of Cerro Poty. The construction of the workshop and exhibition room was a success and women and young people were no longer obliged to sell their wares in the streets of Asunción to go begging. Another feature which made a big impact on us was the notion of equality which emerged between members of the indigenous community and our High School. Today we no longer use the word "indio" (Indian) in referring to the native inhabitants of our land and of our roots."

Fatima Riveros Irigoyen, a 16-year-old girl

Impact of the project

The project made a major impact on all members of the school which led to a fundamental change of attitude towards native peoples. Students consider them as equals without any form of discrimination. Other indigenous peoples from Maka, Nivacle, Ava and Tarres Qom have now joined the project on their own initiative.

Pedagogical value

This project made a major contribution to unity in diversity. It reinforced identity and fostered respect for others in a multicultural society and can be replicated in many other schools and communities.

Contribution to the quality of education

Many situations and resources exist at the community level. Teachers should be encouraged to take initiatives in order to foster dialogues between their students and local minority groups. People need to get to know each other in order to understand and adhere to the notion of equality and dignity of cultures.

Keys for success

- Capacity for inculcating identity and the preservation of culture
- Involvement of the respective families, from the high school and the indigenous community
- Reinforcement of the complementarity between the cultural and economic dimensions of development and the promotion of respect for other cultures
- Recognition of human rights and social equality

You can do it too!

Indigenous peoples in many parts of the world remain vulnerable. Similar projects can and should be conducted which achieve dialogue and contribute to improving the lives and welfare of the world's native inhabitants. Schools in countries which no longer have indigenous peoples can find ways to support indigenous communities elsewhere, through fund-raising and promoting the consumption of fair trade products, for example. Furthermore, when travelling, one can be aware of the value of artwork produced by indigenous people. The treasures of handmade crafts are becoming rare which make them all the more valuable.

"Humanization is a key factor in the development and training of children and young people who consider that the 21st century is characterized, first and foremost, by competition and technological advances to the detriment of good relations and communication between people."

Ms Carrillo de Sosa, Project Coordinator

Remember to observe 9 August, International Day of the World's Indigenous People

17 October, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

5 December, International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development.

The promotion of a culture of peace: tackling the ideology of genocide

Background

In 1994 an unprecedented genocide urged by the Hutu against the Tutsi ethnic group and those who tried to protect them took place and took the lives of some 800,000 men, women and children. In the aftermath of this tragedy, enormous efforts were required to re-establish a foundation of trust for national reconciliation, tolerance and peace-building. Genocide is a crime against humanity and everything must be done to prevent it from recurring.

Project participants

School authorities, some 700 students aged between 13 and 21, teachers and other educational partners (e.g. parents and decision-makers).

Project objectives

- To respond to the massive need in the country to combat the ideology of genocide
- To reinforce a culture of peace and counter the negation and revisionism of genocide
- To spread the ideals of UNESCO in support of peace

Project implementation

This project was based on developing knowledge, attitudes and transferable skills in order to achieve the learning objectives. It was conducted both within the classroom and through extra-curricular activities. The project included five main phases:

- Sensitization
- Training of main actors

Rwanda

School:
Lycée de Rusumo –
private secondary school

City:
Kirehe

Project Coordinator:
Mr A. Dieudonné

- Implementation of activities
- Follow-up
- Evaluation

The emphasis of the project was on the learner and on a participative methodology. In order to make the activities effective and useful, techniques facilitating active participation were used such as: brainstorming, discussions, group work, and the experience of experts. A favourable learning environment was a vital dimension as well as constant interaction between students, teachers and the wider community. In creating a climate conducive to national reconciliation between Tutsi and Hutu, the elements of security, confidence, intellectual freedom, communication, cooperation, innovation and motivation proved to be essential. The role of the teacher remained crucial and involved:

- Motivating the students
- Facilitating working in groups
- Engendering dialogue and ensuring the participation of everyone
- Contextualizing learning and integrating positive values inherent in different cultures

Activities included: i) visits to the Genocide Memorial Site; ii) help to the survivors of the genocide; iii) assistance to the genocide orphans; and iv) a series of cultural events.

During the visit to the Nyarubuye Genocide Memorial students learned more about the scope and conditions of the massacres. They paid special tributes in memory of the victims and discussed the need for reconciliation and finding ways to mend the lingering hurt and prevent any recurrence of the tragedy. In cooperation with the NGO Association of Student Survivors of the Genocide young people organized a special event which included songs and dance in support of peace. Through the presentation of works of art including sculptures, students evoked the rich cultural heritage of their country. During a visit to the Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO, students reiterated their commitment to national reconciliation and to the power of cultural expression in helping to lay a solid foundation in support of it.

Challenges encountered

The project was ambitious and students had to invest all their resources in it. They agreed to bring all of their intelligence, sensitivity, and desire to bear and to work at resolving the problems.

Skills acquired

Young people acquired techniques of peaceful conflict resolution. They developed their capacity to communicate, to undertake research, analyse the findings and engage in constructive debates.

Changes in attitudes

Young people became more respectful of cultural and social diversity and respect for the rights of each human being regardless of ethnicity, gender or religion. Boys and girls helped each other and interchanged roles and tasks.



Visiting the Nyarubuye Genocide Memorial in Rwanda
© Lycée de Rusumo/ASPnet Rwanda

Project results

- Effective training of students in response to the needs of society and in particular to counter the ideology of genocide
- Improvement of the teaching/learning process
- Provision of a more pertinent and effective education
- Implication of students in promoting peace and in resisting anything that could prevent it

Impact of the project

The activities proved to be successful which was largely due to the emphasis placed on the active participation and interaction of the learners. Students' mentalities and behaviour changed: They appreciated positive values of each other's cultures and tried to integrate them in the Rwandan culture. The project enabled students to become more open to others without any distinction of race, gender or religion. The project served as a real bridge between the school and society and consolidated intensive interaction between students, parents, the community and local authorities.

Pedagogical value

The project was extremely relevant in the current socio-cultural context of the country and the absolute need to contribute to national and transnational reconciliation in a country torn apart by the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi population. Furthermore, the knowledge and skills acquired by the students proved to be transferable beyond the school and into society and have helped others to become responsible citizens and builders of peace.

Contribution to the quality of education

Intercultural competences prepare and permit students to live and work effectively in multicultural environments and to learn from each other in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding. Young people become more open to other cultures, to other ways of doing things and learn to resolve problematic situations. Education should encourage students to think for themselves about how they can better contribute to their community, to their country and to the wider world. The development of intercultural competences is an integral part of life-long learning.

"By taking part in this project I felt more concerned by the vital issues facing my society. Through on-going training I hope to continue to seek appropriate solutions to problems in my country and in the world in general."

Claudine Uzabakiriho, a 20-year-old girl

Keys for success

- 'To know and to act' – a learning process based mainly on knowledge, taking action and becoming an agent of change
- 'To know and to mobilize' using all of the school's resources and cultural attributes
- To motivate teachers (facilitators) in view of the context and the significance of the issue
- To ensure active, rather than passive, learning
- To involve the collaboration of many education partners

You can do it too!

Throughout the history of humanity, the horrors of genocide have been practiced time and again and in the case of Rwanda less than twenty years ago. The wounds of genocide or inter-ethnic conflicts can persist for decades, even centuries. In order to prevent such tragedies from recurring we cannot forget or ignore them. All young people, in all parts of the world, need to be aware of the history of genocide, particularly recent examples and take action in support of the survivors and help prevent other genocides from happening.

Remember to observe 16 November, International Day for Tolerance
(and the anniversary of UNESCO) and 10 December, Human Rights Day.

5. The key to respect for cultural diversity



Although the presence of several cultures within a community can make for dynamic, diverse and creative societies, all too often it can lead to exclusion, prejudice and discrimination. Differences and tensions need to be adequately addressed through education which can take on the role of building understanding and respect.

Schools are in a prime position to make major contributions to generating interest, openness and appreciation of other cultures, as well as building bridges between people from different faiths. Yet intercultural learning has yet to be given the place it deserves in school curricula, the learning process and teacher training. UNESCO Associated Schools continue to pursue the development of new and effective ways to bring intercultural dialogue to the forefront – from pre-school to upper secondary education. The following four examples show the capacity of schools for promoting respect for diversity, either within their respective institutions, like the pre-school in Cameroon, in different parts of the same country, as in Namibia, across borders, as practiced in Lithuania, or between world religions, as in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh

School:
Rajuk Uttara Model College –
public secondary school

City:
Uttara, Dhaka

Project Coordinator:
Mr Rashedul Islam Rashed

Achieving peace through understanding of major religions

Background

Bangladesh is a multi-religious society, with a large Muslim community of about 90% of the people and a Hindu and a Christian community. The idea for this project came directly from the school principal, as a means to reduce interfaith misunderstanding, tension and violence and to help prevent religious extremism.

Project participants

The principal, four teachers and 40 students (between 11-18 years old) and indirectly, all 175 teachers and 4,000 students of the college.

Project objectives

- To create a friendly, cooperative and congenial environment in the school by promoting mutual understanding among students of different religions
- To strengthen the moral and social values of the students by highlighting the ethical and humane principles the major religions have in common
- To defuse potential tension and violence that might arise among different religious communities and groups and thereby help to promote peace

Project implementation

Planning phase: The principal consulted teachers about launching a campaign for peace by creating awareness among students and teachers regarding the need to respect other religions and cultures.

Operational phase: A series of motivational lectures on the value of respecting other religions and cultures was arranged for students. A coordinating body was set up consisting of the principal and four teachers from three different religions. They collected precepts and important sayings from each religion advocating social peace and religious harmony. A comparative course on the study of religions (especially the ethical and humanistic aspects of religions) was then offered to 40 students, using drama and visual aids. Emphasis was placed on discussion and participative learning.

Follow-up phase: In addition to the continuation of the above-mentioned activities, selected precepts were displayed on school walls and prominent places. Students conducted in-depth studies of the founders and prophets of major religions and visits were made to holy places of the various faiths under study. The British Council and a school in Scotland facilitated fruitful exchanges on important religious practices and celebrations of the Christian religion as well as learning about different facets of European culture.

Challenges encountered

Some of the 'hardliners' of different religions, especially from the dominant faith, Islam, were not in favour of talking about other religions. However, after learning about the necessity of doing so, they did not resist, but not all of them may be fully convinced.

"I am learning a great deal about other religions and cultures through this project. I now respect people from other religions much more than I used to. I am convinced that my birth in a Hindu family is a coincidence. I could have been born in another family belonging to another faith or culture."

Giriraj Shaha, 17 year-old boy

Skills acquired

Students improved their listening and dialogue skills and widened their capacity to become more open-minded towards other religions and other cultures.

Changes in attitude

Before introducing this project, some students belonging to one religion did not easily mix with students from other religions. As a result of the project students spend time together.

Project results

- The introduction of an effective comparative course on the study of religions
- A new learning environment conducive to showing respect towards other faiths and eliminating religious-based tensions and conflicts

Impact of the project

Students and staff have become more tolerant towards religions and cultures different from their own. The principal was encouraged by the results of the project and has shared them with other interested schools. Although the local media did not cover this project, other institutions in the community are starting to show interest in it.

Pedagogical value

One of the main purposes of education is to raise the consciousness of students. Such a project helps to prepare future leaders to become broad-minded and respect the values and cultures of others. The peaceful environment created in the school enhanced and inspired the learning process.

Contribution to the quality of education

Such a project is relevant to the needs of the community and complements the curriculum. Positive changes have been made in the school environment and contribute to the promotion of peace.



Learning in Bangladesh at the Unique Child Learning Center
© UNESCO/GMR Akash

Keys for success

- Positive involvement by the principal of the school
- Full cooperation of the teachers and the project coordinator
- Involvement of the students and school staff
- Support from education authorities and school management

You can do it too!

Countries throughout the world face problems of interfaith tensions and violence. By providing a broader knowledge base and understanding of major religions, social cohesion and peace can be strengthened in school and society. The UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education state that “It is fundamentally important that democratic societies address interreligious issues through education. These issues now belong to the educational agenda in many countries throughout the world. Yet it is important to note the importance of an interfaith component within Intercultural Education.”

Remember to observe 16 November, International Day for Tolerance.

Cameroon

School:
“The Butterflies” –
private pre-school and elementary
school

City:
Yaoundé

Project Coordinator:
Ms Towa Foe Amougou

Respect for cultural diversity in favour of Sustainable Development

Background

In Cameroon there are some 200 different ethnic groups. The country was successively colonized by Germany, France and the United Kingdom. In view of such cultural diversity in both school and society, there was a need to initiate a project which could contribute to unity in diversity.

Project participants

All classes comprising some 275 pupils aged between 2 and 12 years of age.

Project objectives

- To promote a climate of tolerance and mutual respect
- To reduce linguistic and cultural barriers

Project implementation

Attitudes of empathy and solidarity are formed at a very early age. In a multicultural country like Cameroon, emphasis was therefore placed on respect and appreciation of differences and the elimination of any sort of prejudice or discrimination. With very young children, teachers highlighted the linguistic and cultural specificities of each ethnic group represented in each classroom. The children learned many key words and idioms as well as their cultural significance. Through dance and music, they became familiar with the rich cultural diversity of their classmates. Older students were introduced to crafts made by different regional ethnic groups and were given the possibility of producing their own artwork. The project was conducted as part of the curriculum in language classes, civic education, and geography. Some of the initiatives were extended and reinforced as extra-curricular activities. Every year the project culminates in a gala evening with the presentation of clothing, fabrics, accessories and



Children express themselves through role play © Ecole “Les Papillons”/ASPnet Cameroon

dishes from the different ethnic groups. Priority was given to learning by doing and learning through enjoyment.

Challenges encountered

The teachers made some changes in the planning of classes to give more attention to cultural relevance.

Skills acquired

The children's linguistic capacity and expressiveness was strengthened and their creativity was enhanced.

Changes in attitude

The project played a crucial role in eliminating prejudice, stereotypes and cultural incompatibilities. It also developed the notion of a culture of excellence and merit.

Project results

- The main results obtained were behavioural – students developed a spirit of exchange, sharing and of teamwork
- Students became more open-minded and appreciative of other cultures
- Manifestations of discrimination were eliminated

Impact of the project

Students learned to take into account cultural differences in a positive way and to develop a spirit of tolerance thereby preventing eventual conflicts.

"Intercultural dialogue helps us to unite as if we came from the same culture. It facilitates integration and love."

Wenang, an 11-year-old boy

Pedagogical value

The project responded to the teaching approach underway in the country which focuses on the acquisition of competences and places the student at the centre of learning. This approach enables the student to measure the impact and importance of what she/he is learning and to make connections.

Contribution to the quality of education

Students should take pleasure in learning and creativity is an essential dimension of the learning process. Intercultural learning is also linked to citizenship education whereby children appreciate others because of who they are, and not because of their cultural identity.

"Intercultural dialogue allows us to tolerate, to help each other, to be more united and not to reject each other."

Stella Kepseu, a 10-year-old girl

Keys for success

- A well-conceptualized and feasible project
- Favourable socio-psychological conditions for its implementation
- Carefully planned and conducted activities
- Systematic review of results obtained at each phase of the project
- Follow-up and dissemination of results



Learning traditional crafts: Pottery workshop © Ecole "Les Papillons"/ ASPnet Cameroon

You can do it too!

Racism and discrimination can develop at a very early age. They should be eradicated, and the appreciation of cultural differences promoted. Pre-schools and primary schools can play a crucial role in this by using the rich cultural resources available in the community. Parents, grandparents and community members of different origins can be invited to the school to present unique aspects of their respective cultures and to introduce young people to their language, music, art and crafts.

Remember to observe 21 February, International Mother Language Day.

Lithuania South Caucasus – A Part of Europe

School:
Nida Secondary School –
public secondary school

City:
Vilnius

Project Coordinator:
Ms Giedre Simanauskaite

Background

This project involved five ASPnet schools and was initiated by the Lithuanian Association of Non-Formal Education in co-operation with its Austrian partner, the Interkulturelles Zentrum. The Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO and the Lithuanian ASPnet were chosen as partners on account of previous successful projects. In addition to fostering intercultural dialogue the project focused on development issues. This was due to rapid transformation over two decades in the two regions of Europe and the Southern Caucasus with the countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. This sub-region was selected because during the era of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the people in the Baltic States had much in common with people from the South Caucasus region. When Lithuania joined the European Union following the end of the USSR, it had less contact with the Caucasus. In Austria, on the other hand, young people were not familiar with the Caucasus. The project thus aimed to foster renewed contact between these five countries.

Project participants

Some 200 students aged between 14 and 21 years old and 10 teachers from ASPnet schools in Lithuania.

Project objective

- To make Austrian and Lithuanian young people more aware of the daily life, development issues and future perspectives in the Caucasus region and in their own countries

Project implementation

Launched in 2008, the project culminated in 2010. The first year consisted mainly of workshops attended by teachers and students from the five countries Lithuania, Austria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Plans for getting to know each other better were elaborated and ideas were put forward for an information campaign about the Caucasus countries to be launched in Austria and Lithuania. Classroom learning about these countries made good use of media studies with emphasis on a critical approach.

During the second year, youth in Lithuania produced information materials about life in the Caucasus region and distributed them widely both within the schools and in the various communities, including to drivers stuck in traffic jams. In Austria, teachers and students created an interactive exhibition entitled "On the Way: Young peoples'

perspectives concerning the Southern Caucasus,” which was inaugurated at the central library in Vienna and subsequently presented in Innsbruck and Linz. It then travelled to Lithuania and was displayed in Vilnius and several other cities.

Lithuania also hosted a five-day study visit for ASPnet teachers from the five countries. The main focus was to encourage cooperation between schools in the European Union (EU) and in the South Caucasus region. In this connection, an open conference was held on the topic ‘On the way’ for cooperation with South Caucasus countries – opportunities and experiences’. It was attended by 60 teachers and educators from Lithuanian schools and institutions.

Challenges encountered

This project was not mandatory and therefore dependent on volunteers. One of the biggest challenges was to keep students motivated and involved in a three-year project. Communication with the three Caucasus countries was sometimes difficult. The age of students in the Caucasus did not always match the age as those in Lithuania and Austria. This sometimes resulted in uneven levels of interest among them. It was not always easy to change students’ attitudes.

Skills developed

Students developed language skills and especially improved their English. Furthermore, they gained communication and organizational skills and became more media literate.

Changes in attitude

Students became more open and curious about the South Caucasus region, and some even expressed desire to visit it, as well as in other countries in general. They developed a critical approach to the media. They became more enthusiastic about sharing their culture with others and confident in speaking other languages.

Project results

- An interactive intercultural exhibition and the production of promotional material about life in the Caucasus region
- A better understanding of the cultural life and education systems in the three Caucasus countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia
- Media literacy

Impact of the project

Students developed intercultural competences and made new friends. They shared articles on the school website, discussed the project in their blogs and shared the project results with friends and relatives. Parents participated in some aspects of the media homework and shared their knowledge and experience of the Caucasus countries with their children. The professional development of teachers was enhanced, their knowledge of the Caucasus countries increased, and they had meaningful contacts with colleagues from the other countries. Local communities learned about life in the Caucasus region as a result of the exhibition which was free to all.

Pedagogical value

This project is a good example of fruitful collaboration between education and the non-formal sector, i.e. working with non-governmental organizations. It was also very



Intercultural workshop
© ASPnet Lithuania

effective in developing media literacy, which was considered as important as learning to read and write. Although the media are the main source of how people learn about the world and their own countries, some schools lag behind in integrating the critical use of media in the learning process.

Contribution to the quality of education

People travel often from one country to another for a variety of reasons: for holidays, to pursue their education or for employment purposes. Intercultural education helps to prepare young people to be mobile in a multicultural region and indeed, in a multicultural world.

“During the project I got to know where Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan are on the map and how young people there are living, what they do, how they study and much more. I am happy that with some of the people I met we stayed really good friends!”

Alna Katinaite, an 18-year-old girl

Keys for success

- Encouragement of students to do their best and believe in their capacity
- Effective use of creativity
- Partnerships with students of similar ages in other countries
- Involvement of people in the community who are from the country being studied
- The use of social media which young people use in their daily life: YouTube, Facebook or Twitter

You can do it too!

This project shows how effective it can be for schools in two countries to team up in order to study another sub-region. Think of your own region or country

“I am now very curious to go to South Caucasus to see everything with my own eyes.”

Arijus Sukys, a 17-year-old boy

and select a sub-area to be studied in depth. Students can access the Internet for relevant information, and make media education part of the project. Consult local non-governmental organizations to see if they can be of help. Although travel might be expensive, efforts can be made to identify people from the sub-region living nearby who could serve as resource persons. The preparation and production of exhibitions is a good way to share project results with the educational community, parents and civil society.

Namibia

School:
Rehoboth High School –
public secondary school

City:
Rehoboth

Project Coordinator:
Ms Erica van der Hoven

Harmony in diversity – a traditional recipe book

Background

This initiative emanated from students in the ASPnet school club to raise awareness of the rich cultural diversity within Namibia. In the 1880s the country was annexed by Germany. After World War I, it was mandated to South Africa. It gained its independence in 1990. The Namibian population consists of diverse ethnic groups, namely: Ovambos, Caprivians and Kavangos who live in the North and Northeastern part of the country and Hereros, Namas, Tswanas and Damaras who live in the Central, Western, Eastern and Southern part of Namibia, and around Windhoek, the capital. About 10% of the population is of European origin, notably the Rehoboth Basters who are of Khoisan and European ancestry.

Project participants

Students aged between 14 -18 years old, six teachers and 14 ASPnet schools from throughout the country.

Project objectives

- To develop a practical intercultural tool that is portable and easy to use by everyone
- To gain knowledge about the traditional foods associated with different Namibian cultures, which are part of Namibia's intangible cultural heritage
- To introduce traditional local dishes and understand that they result from peoples' customs, culture, climate, location as well as their nutritional needs

Project implementation

Once the ASPnet club members agreed to prepare and produce a booklet of Namibian traditional recipes, a series of discussions were held on how best to conduct such a project. The principal and teaching staff were consulted. An editorial board was then set up. Each student had a specific task such as liaison with other ASPnet schools in Namibia, photography, typing, editing, design and financing. Students and teachers in the ASPnet club gathered recipes from the local community and the liaison officer contacted ASPnet schools in different parts of the country inviting them to send recipes from their respective regions via e-mail, fax or post. Many contributions were received. Students assembled the manuscript with the help of school staff and facilities, and made it as attractive as possible by including photographs of the dishes prepared and utensils used. A local printer produced the recipe book free of charge. The recipe book was launched at the annual Namibian UNESCO ASPnet Camp. Club members who had contributed to the book were invited to demonstrate their respective recipes. The students took great pride in doing so and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Challenges encountered

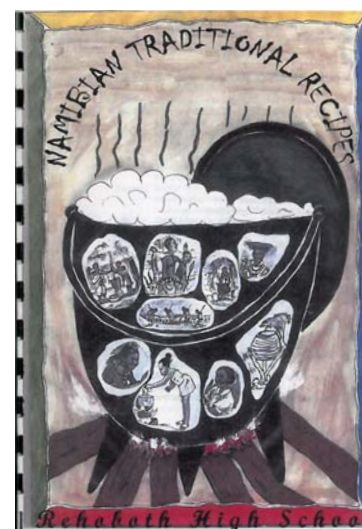
Communication with other schools in the country posed a problem, and provisions had to be made to cover postal services. The financing of the book was also a challenge, but it was met with the support of the local business community.

Skills acquired

As a result of the project students gained confidence and were able to distinguish between customs of different indigenous cultural groups and communicate about them. Furthermore, students not only sharpened their technological skills in preparing and producing the recipe book, but also gained a better insight into traditional technology used in preparing food in different parts of the country.

Changes in attitude

Students' curiosity was stimulated, as they were keen to learn more about the origins and functions of the various recipes, whether typical everyday meals or dishes ones served on special occasions. As a result there was an increase of appreciation of the different cultures.



The recipe book produced by students
© Rehoboth High School/ASPnet Namibia

Project results

- The production of an attractive illustrated book in several local languages. Each recipe is presented in the specific language of the indigenous culture of its origin, and also translated to English. The book contains some 38 recipes from all over the country
- The testing of recipes locally and nationally and beyond Namibia

Impact of the project

Students enjoyed taking part in the project which helped to sustain their interest and participation and gave them a sense of achievement when the book was published.

Pedagogical value

The preparation of such a publication involves a number of subjects, especially social sciences, languages, the arts and life skills. It fosters harmonious collaboration among people from different cultures in different parts of the country.

Contribution to the quality of education

Learning about what people eat in any given region sheds light on customs, traditions, values and lifestyles. It reinforces nutrition education which is giving more attention in school curricula.

"The publication of this recipe book is indeed a milestone in the history of Rehoboth High School. We feel humble yet privileged to have been able to contribute modestly to cultural awareness in culinary art through the medium of this book. For the food presented in this volume not only reflects the diversity of the country in which we live but also the spirit of initiative which has become distinctive of the Namibian kitchen."

Dai Titus, Principal, Rehoboth High School

Keys for success

- Identification of a specific need and assurance that it can be met in a sustainable way
- Selection of a dedicated committee to spearhead the implementation of the project
- Involvement of other stakeholders to share ownership of the project
- Clear division of responsibilities and tasks of committee members
- Continuous monitoring and assessment of progress made during all stages of the execution of the project
- Fun and enjoyable for participants

You can do it too!

Interest in food is universal and by preparing a recipe book reflecting different cultures (within a given country or sub-region), one can learn much about traditions, customs, lifestyles, values and nutrition. ASPnet can greatly facilitate the preparation of such a publication within any given country and help with inputs from other countries and cultures. Gender stereotypes as related to food preparation (traditionally the role of women) can be debated and questioned. As in the Namibian cookbook, one can add illustrations, proverbs and artwork. Also, by cooperating with the local business community through sponsorship or other arrangements it can be produced at a low cost.

Remember to observe 16 October, World Food Day.

6. An inherent dimension of World Heritage Education



One of the most significant and long-lasting of UNESCO's activities has been the protection and promotion of World Heritage. Among the first sites to be inscribed on the World Heritage List was the Abu Simbel complex of temples (Egypt) which were threatened by the overflow of the Nile from the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Between 1964 and 1968 the site was rescued and relocated on higher ground by the international community under the aegis of UNESCO. This site is part of the 962 cultural, natural and mixed properties which were registered on the list as of July 2012. All have one thing in common: their exceptional universal value.

However, registration on the World Heritage List alone is not enough. Such properties are constantly threatened from lack of resources, environmental degradation, natural disasters, unrest, mass tourism and modern developments. Sites have to be maintained, protected and enhanced if they are to survive and be enjoyed by present and future generations.

The idea of involving young people in World Heritage preservation and promotion came as a response to Article 27 of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention). Launched in 1994, the World Heritage Education (WHE) Programme provides young people with the knowledge, skills, network and commitment to become involved in heritage protection from local to global levels. Young people learn about World Heritage sites, about the history and traditions of their own and other cultures, about ecology and the importance of protecting biodiversity. They become aware of the threats facing the sites and learn how common international cooperation can help save heritage. Most importantly, they discover how they can contribute to heritage conservation and make themselves heard.

New pedagogical approaches are developed to mobilize young people to participate actively in the promotion of World Heritage, including the World Heritage Education Kit, which has been translated into more than 30 languages, and other educational resource materials such as animated films.

As illustrated in the following examples submitted by China and the Syrian Arab Republic, embarking on World Heritage education help young people to adopt the role of caretakers of treasures handed down from preceding generations and thus become prime actors in fostering intercultural dialogue.

China Dialogue between youth and cultural heritage

School:

Experimental High School Attached to
Beijing Normal University –
public secondary school

City:

Beijing

Project Coordinator:
Ms Xiaoyuan Gao

Background

The school sent a delegation to the first UNESCO World Heritage Youth Forum held in Bergen, Norway in 1995 and subsequently became a pioneer in developing the concept of World Heritage Education. More recently, the project coordinator attended a training course on cultural heritage protection in Asia and the Pacific organized by the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO in 2009 in Japan.

Project participants

600 students aged between 12 and 18 years old, some 100 teachers, 10 government officials and 20 members of the educational administration staff.

Project objectives

To understand and appreciate the social, traditional and cultural history of China, the culture and history of other countries and the concept of World Heritage.

Project implementation

The school has integrated the UNESCO World Heritage Education Project into the curriculum in such compulsory courses as Geography, History, English, Chinese and Music. A special course called "International Dialogue" is given once a week and alternates between lectures on history, culture, World Heritage, society and the visits of foreign university students who come to the course to share their culture with the students. The school regularly organizes visits to museums and heritage sites, both locally and nationally and plans participatory activities designed to arouse curiosity and motivate, such as field trips, role-play, games and competitions. All activities result in discussions and debates in order to internalize knowledge gained and to deepen reflection and ideas. In the final stage teachers raise questions dealing with challenges so that students can develop problem-solving techniques. Every year the school organizes an Annual Traditional Culture Day during which students take part in cultural performances and demonstrations to show appreciation for customs and traditions. Students have numerous opportunities for pursuing their interest in heritage studies and sharing their experiences and skills developed which include the following:

- Opting to become teaching assistants in remote areas in China during winter and summer vacations
- Taking part in the Students' Heritage Association (in which students select a topic, research it on Internet and exchange findings with young people in another country)
- Participating in international youth fora
- Travelling abroad with home stays in partner schools

Challenges encountered

The project began with student-centred activities and methods such as inquiry-based learning. Students had long been accustomed to teacher-led learning and they felt nervous about these methods which require a sense of responsibility and a capacity for independent study. Projects sometimes increase the study load which is already quite heavy in secondary education, especially when a publication project is involved, as was the case here. Teachers thus have to be well prepared from the beginning, and spend sufficient time explaining the advantages of such methods, as well as laying the foundation for the subject. Frequent reassurance, dialogue with students and explaining the advantages of independent, problem-solving learning is important. Teachers should also be encouraged to create opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges.

Skills acquired

Students developed proficiency in English, the initiative to communicate and share views with others, and improved public speaking and problem-solving techniques.

Changes in attitudes

Students became more tolerant, open and respectful towards others.



Sharing China's cultural heritage with visitors from around the world
© Experimental High School/ASPnet China



International exchange programme
© Experimental High School/ASPnet China

Project results

- On-going participation in several events, such as Second World Heritage Youth Forum (2006) and the International Symposium on World Heritage Education in the Republic of Korea (2007)
- Youth manifesto “Duty and Mission – Approach Cultural Heritage and Pass on the Torch of Culture”
- The professional development of teachers (some have become ‘star teachers’ and invited to speak on the prestigious education channel CCTV10)

Impact of the project

Students’ horizons were broadened and their enthusiasm for study and analysis was enhanced. They gained a sense of mission and understood their responsibility to protect cultural heritage.

Pedagogical value

Intercultural learning often relies on inquiry-based learning which is essential for adapting to an increasingly global world. It starts with respecting the differences between each student and draws on both formal and non-formal learning, including a variety of activities to supplement the curriculum. Students learn to prepare for future changes and strive to create a better quality of life.

Contribution to the quality of education

Quality education is directly linked to preparing students to meet the needs of society. Knowledge of traditional values and interest in other cultures are important for shaping an international vision and global awareness. Cultural exchanges and the promotion of mutual understanding reduce conflict and help to construct a harmonious society. Students keep intercultural skills throughout their lives – an important dimension of sustainability and life-long learning. Education is supposed to be an enjoyable journey that inspires and motivates students. One should avoid ‘cramming’ and instead arouse interest and creativity in students so they acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills which will help them lead responsible and creative lives.

“World cultural heritage serves not only as a tool for and bridge between youngsters all over the world but also as an important vehicle for protecting and promoting national cultures. While protecting the tangible World Heritage, the world’s intangible and ethical heritage is equally preserved.”

Ms Xiaoyuan Gao, Project Coordinator

Keys for success

- Support from education authorities
- Teachers serving as role models
- Connection to the regular curriculum to prevent increase of students’ workload
- Use of a common language for facilitating communication
- Selection of themes of common interest to all
- Surveys (to be taken both before and after projects) and constant feedback from students
- Availability of technology required for cross-cultural communication

You can do it too!

The UNESCO World Heritage Education Kit for Teachers is a practical and useful guide for sensitizing and mobilizing young people to take part in the promotion and preservation of World Heritage as well as their local and national heritage. Schools can also organize World Heritage Youth forums and encounters, involving whenever possible students from other parts of the country or from abroad in order to share ideas and proposals on how best to care for heritage, including intangible heritage such as music, poetry and dance.

More about the World Heritage Education Project: whc.unesco.org

Remember to observe 21 May,
World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

Syrian Arab Republic and the World Heritage List

Background

Several outstanding sites in the country are inscribed on the World Heritage List such as the Site of Palmyra (former palace of Queen Zenobia, located in the desert) and the ancient cities of Aleppo and Damascus. A delegation of Syrian educators and heritage specialists attended the First UNESCO World Heritage Education Training Seminar held in Amman, Jordan in 1998.

Project participants

The entire school became one team.

Project objectives

- Sensitize students to the Syrian heritage and to World Heritage in general
- Develop students' responsibilities for protecting heritage
- Enable young people to communicate and exchange knowledge and ideas

Project implementation

Lectures and discussions on local, national and World Heritage were arranged to better understand the value of heritage. Students expressed their opinions and ideas and became interested in assuming responsibility for heritage protection. In general, this was a student-led project in which students voted on the operational plan to be implemented. Visits to different sites were organized in the Ancient City of Damascus, which is a recognized World Heritage site (the Omayyad Mosque, the Bab Sharqi Walls, the Azem Palace and the Damascus Citadel). Students interviewed their peers, tourists and site managers.

Challenges encountered

Patience and effective teamwork helped to solve minor organizational problems.

Skills acquired

Students learned to work in groups and developed their capacity to transform ideas into action. They acquired planning techniques and improved their communication skills.

Syrian Arab Republic

School:
Al-Motafawekeen Secondary School –
public school for gifted students

City:
Douma (Damascus)

Project Coordinator:
Ms Thana'a Miselmaneih



The Ancient City of Damascus
© UNESCO/G. Degeorges

Changes in attitudes

By using problem-solving techniques, students learned how to overcome obstacles and cooperate better in group work.

Project results

Voluntary work in support of heritage protection.

Impact of the project

Students became very enthusiastic, interested and helpful. The local community showed more interest and support when initiatives came from the young people themselves.

Pedagogical value

The project developed creativity and served as an outlet for the students' energy as they were not confined to their desks. Students need practical, challenging and positive experiences that take them out of the classroom.

"Today I am much more aware of the responsibility required for World Heritage concerns not only in my country but world-wide. I feel really proud and excited."

Jouad Al-Halabi, a 17-year-old boy

Contribution to the quality of education

Field work and teamwork produce real results and help to sustain the interest of students. Furthermore, giving students the opportunity to meet people in charge of heritage site management was both motivating and validating.

Keys for success

- Sufficient basic knowledge and ability to conduct research on the content of the project
- Confidence in achieving the goals
- Awareness of the enormous potential of young people
- Belief in the project
- Intrinsic motivation without waiting for praise, fame or rewards

You can do it too!

Select a World Heritage site in your country or a site of special importance with an intercultural dimension. Invite students to research the site and prepare a visit. Try to arrange interviews with site managers and visitors and encourage students to include questions about the value and status of the site, eventual threats facing it, how the site can best contribute to the promotion of intercultural dialogue and how it can be further preserved and promoted. Invite students to reflect and debate on the positive and possible negative consequences of mass tourism at a particular location.

Remember to observe 21 May,

World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

7. Let's do it! Guidelines for conducting Intercultural Dialogue Projects



This Third Collection of Good Practices has shown that UNESCO Associated Schools have gained valuable experience in developing the art and practice of intercultural dialogue. The selected good practices illustrate the fact that intercultural learning and dialogue must be part and parcel of quality education and the foundation for learning to live together as advocated in Learning: The Treasure Within, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century.

In the case of this collection, projects were conducted in many different parts of the world by a wide range of schools. Some of these institutions benefit from considerable resources while others have the bare minimum infrastructure. However, all share the same commitment – to involve children and young people in forging meaningful intercultural dialogues. By reaching out to others, in the community or on the other side of the world, students can acquire the intercultural competences required for learning, living and working in multicultural societies.

What can we learn from such a wide range of projects and initiatives?

Firstly, it is obvious that there is not one common recipe: each school has to take into account its own cultural context as well as its human, technical, material and financial resources. However, many common ingredients can and should be taken into consideration.

Secondly, planning, conducting and following up intercultural dialogue is a little like planning and preparing a meal. It requires reflection, analysis of available means, using as many local resources as possible, the right amount of inventiveness and the necessary patience.

Thirdly, it is important to recognize the role schools everywhere have to play in forging intercultural dialogue.

Ingredients for intercultural dialogue

Teachers and students have demanding workloads and the curriculum is often already very full. Where can one start – or improve what is already under way?

Let us take a closer look at some of the key ingredients and lessons learned from UNESCO Associated Schools around the world which can serve as starting points for future dialogues and exchanges.

As with planning a meal, projects need good preparation (the starter), sound implementation (the main course) and effective follow-up (the dessert).

1. Good preparation – the starter

Preparations should include:

- Elaboration of objectives
- Identification of partners
- Required resources
- Working calendar
- Assessment techniques



Japanese students during an art class
© UNESCO/Livia Saldari

Elaboration of objectives

When planning an intercultural dialogue project, take time to clearly define its objectives. Try to make sure that they are attainable and that the necessary resources needed for meeting them are either available or can be secured. Possible objectives could include:

- To further explore one's cultural identity and to awaken interest in other cultures and value systems
- To promote openness, tolerance and mutual respect and combat stereotypes, stigma, prejudice and discrimination
- To exchange information and ideas about major world concerns related to sustainable development, HIV and AIDS, human rights and citizenship, among other issues, and to seek practical solutions
- To learn about the extraordinary achievements of past and present generations (including the study of World Heritage), as well as studying tragic events such as genocides in order to prevent them from recurring.

Identification of partners

Attempts should be made to involve the entire school i.e. teachers, non-teaching staff and parent associations. As with cooking, it is the chef who counts. The principal is a key figure and can be a most valuable resource person. Support from municipal education authorities, teacher trainers and curriculum developers are also useful. Personnel from governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) specialized in working with immigrants, as well as indigenous people, local, national and World Heritage; librarians, journalists, artists, craftspeople, museum specialists, architects and linguists are among those who can make useful contributions. Efforts should also be made to form a partnership with a school in another country and ASPnet can facilitate such arrangements.

Required resources

The most important resources are the people – students and teachers working as a team and bringing in valuable external help. As for material resources, ICT either within the school or in the community have proven to be indispensable in ensuring frequent and effective communication between partners.

With regard to financial means, projects, like meals, often rely on a minimum of funds unless one has a garden or lives on a farm. However, a delicious meal does not necessarily have to cost a lot of money – like an excellent project, it can be undertaken with minimum funds. Students often prove to be clever in raising funds through bake sales, putting on cultural performances and doing car washes or other odd jobs. Parents can provide some support as can local businesses. When the project is worthwhile, resources can somehow be secured to carry it out.

Working calendar

A schedule should be prepared taking into account school holidays, exam periods and, when working with partner schools, the school calendar of the partner country.

Assessment techniques

Just as the cook tastes and checks the dishes under preparation, assessment is an important dimension of any educational initiative and should be built into the planning and implementation phases. Since intercultural dialogue not only deals with



Classroom in Morocco
© UNESCO/Livia Saldari

knowledge, with attitudes, outlooks and behaviour – assessment should cover all of these areas. Monitoring each stage of the project is necessary and pre- and post-questionnaires for learners can be useful. Students can also be invited to write essays describing what they gained from the project.

2. Project implementation – the main course

Like the main course of a meal, project implementation is the heart and soul of effective intercultural dialogue and the essence of ASPnet's contributions to the quality of education. Through project work great strides have been made to improve the learning process, motivate learners, provide a holistic approach to education, and ensure valuable links between school and society. Partnerships with schools in other countries are particularly motivating for students.

In implementing projects, special emphasis is given to:

A. Content – the main ingredient

Intercultural dialogue involves exploring identity and learning about other cultures, values and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect. While learning about another culture, one learns more about one's own roots and heritage. In this era of rapid change and constant transformation, many customs and traditions are losing ground. Intercultural dialogue encourages children and young people to reflect more on their lifestyles which they can compare to those of their parents and grandparents, thereby fostering an intergenerational dialogue as well as valuable links between the past and the present.

As we know, culture is not static but constantly evolving. Dialogues can focus on new forms of cultural expression, including social media, blogging and online discussions, without losing sight of the need to preserve past forms of expression such as crafts, monuments, and architecture. Intangible heritage of the past and present, such as music, language, cuisine and dance, is also a valuable dimension.

Intercultural dialogue can also be enhanced through world issues, international instruments and international days:

- Sustainable development, especially topics related to water conservation, climate change, respect for biodiversity, protection of the environment and disaster risk reduction
- Combating the HIV and AIDS pandemic
- Economic, social and cultural inclusion of minority groups
- The eight UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- World Heritage (e.g. Brasilia, the capital of Brazil; the Statue of Liberty, New York, USA) and the preservation of natural sites (Great Barrier Reef, Australia; Galapagos Islands, Ecuador) and mixed properties (Loire Valley, France)
- International instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992), the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001)



Teachers from different European countries unpack new resource material
© UNESCO/Livia Saldari

- The mandates of the UN, UNESCO and other UN Specialized Agencies (FAO, WHO, ILO)
- Lastly, the preparation and observance of International Days, Years and Decades declared by the UN General Assembly

The content for intercultural dialogue and learning is also largely values-oriented and includes:

- Interest in and openness towards others
- Mutual respect and appreciation
- Sharing and caring
- Tolerance
- Empathy
- Unity in diversity
- Global citizenship
- Self-confidence
- Enthusiasm
- Curiosity
- Responsibility
- Solidarity

B. Methodology – the spices

Even if one has the best ingredients, if they do not have taste and flavour, the result falls short of expectations. Research-driven, student-centred and participatory learning methods have greatly developed giving students real taste for their learning.

Interdisciplinary approaches

Intercultural dialogue projects are multi-faceted and cross-curricular. Interdisciplinary approaches have thus proven to be the most effective. Furthermore, since the official curriculum is usually demanding, it is not easy to include additional courses or subjects. Culture relates to so many different facets of life that efforts should be made to involve as many teachers as possible from various disciplines, not only from the humanities, such as history, geography, language, literature, but also science and technology, informatics, mathematics, art, music and physical education and sports.

Creativity

Creativity plays a central role in the learning process. Students have considerable amounts of latent talent. Yet they need to have opportunities to recognize and develop their creative attributes through storytelling, drama, music, art, crafts, producing radio programmes, web design and video.

Learning by doing

ASPnet helped to pioneer experiential learning through the promotion of practical projects with tangible results. Students can be invited to form teams and working groups whereby each one is given a specific role and responsibilities.



Children in Gabon perform a cultural song © UNESCO/Livia Saldari

Learning through enjoyment

Learning should be enjoyable. Role-play, games, viewing and discussing films, planning cultural festivals, preparing questionnaires, participating in videoconferences can be inspiring and fulfilling.

Formal and non-formal education

Only so much can be learned within the four walls of the classroom and the school grounds. Well-prepared excursions to places of interest, and study trips within and outside the country can reinforce classroom learning in a stimulating way. Cooperating with a wide range of structures and organizations enables students to have effective intercultural dialogue within their own communities. It also provides opportunities to do volunteer work and take part in solidarity initiatives.

Museums, libraries, places of memory, archives, exhibitions, local and World Heritage properties offer additional resources and contacts.

Building bridges between schools

One of the reasons for setting up the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) in 1953 was to facilitate contact and exchanges between participating institutions, both nationally and globally. Today, many UNESCO Associated Schools have one or two partner schools but there is scope for many more school partnerships at all levels: within countries, between countries and between regions.

Optimum use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

ICT have become valuable educational tools, and are now indispensable for dialogues within and beyond one's borders. Most young people already make maximum use of Internet, mail, and social media in their private lives. Because communication has become instantaneous, students sometimes become frustrated or lose interest if there is not frequent and interesting communication with their partners. They need to be aware about the 'digital divide': the gap between schools with good connectivity and those which are less equipped or not at all, which can also be the case within countries. It is important for the former whenever possible to share some of their resources with the latter. In schools with no access to ICT, solutions can sometimes be found in cybercafés, local families, local businesses, NGOs and government offices.

Participatory and creative methods enable students to become the prime actors in the learning process and teachers the facilitators. Together they become the protagonists of intercultural dialogue.

C. Acquisition of life-long skills – seasoning

In cooking, spices alone do not suffice. It is the seasoning or the particular blend of spices which makes the difference. The same is true for intercultural dialogue, it does not suffice to have the right methods. Skills are also needed that can be useful immediately as well as in the future. Special attention should be given to developing the following skills:

- Language proficiency, improved reading, writing, listening, debating and negotiating, both in the mother tongue and in other languages
- Public speaking and media relations (press, radio, television)

- Teamwork and leadership
- Problem-solving
- Peaceful resolution of conflict
- Research: collect, analyse and summarize findings and communicate them clearly
- Using ICT effectively
- Management and organizational skills such as preparing and conducting an event, campaign or study tour; attending to logistics and securing support

D. Media coverage – salt and pepper

Most meals call for at least one of these ingredients and sometimes both. ASPnet projects are always designed to have a multiplier effect – at local, national, regional and international levels. If projects remain bland, they risk falling short of their objectives. In launching, conducting and concluding projects, strive to include this media ingredient so as to inspire other schools while informing the local community. Invite journalists to school or prepare articles for the local and national media, such as educational journals. Invite radio and television stations to come for interviews and reporting or propose staff and students to take part in educational and cultural programmes. Schools sometimes worry that the media is only interested in violence at school, strikes or low exam results but if projects are truly innovative and creative, there is a good chance they will receive attention from the media and lead to the elusive multiplier effect.

3. Effective follow-up – dessert

Once an intercultural dialogue has been successfully conducted, the following actions are like the icing on the cake: communication, thanks, recognition and planning the next project.

A. Communicate project results

As an UNESCO Associated School, it is important to have a 'project diary', i.e. a record of your project in the form of texts, photos and audio and video content. They can be posted on a blog as in the case of some schools. Just as you cannot serve a cake until it is baked, you cannot communicate project results until they have been achieved. Once attained, the project results should be communicated to education authorities, media outlets and other stakeholders. Report on your project to your ASPnet National Coordinator who can make your results better known among the education community in the country, to UNESCO Field Offices and Headquarters. Educational authorities can disseminate the results and use them to feed into reforms aimed at improving the quality of education.

B. Thank all partners and eventual sponsors

If you have received support from within your school and from your community or national authorities be sure to express your appreciation. Your partner school has played a vital role in making dialogue possible and all support should be recognized. Students can draft thank you notes and imagine other ways to pay tribute for support received.

C. Give special recognition to learners

The main benefit for students forging intercultural dialogue resides in the positive change of attitudes, perception and behaviour which it helps them to achieve. Recognition for extra time and efforts invested by students can take various forms:

- Academic credits
- Special mention on report cards
- Certificates of merit
- Nominations to become Junior Ambassadors

D. Plan the next intercultural dialogue project

Yes, it is time to start planning the next meal! Now that you have the basic ingredients as well as the art of making the best of them, it is time to plan your next project. It might be an extension of the project just completed, on a new departure. Students will have suggestions about other countries, cultures and topics to be covered.

Just like a good cook, it is important to build and improve on existing achievements. You can be sure that each project will improve, along with the quality of education.

So let's get started!

Conclusion



The good practices in favour of intercultural dialogue shared in this collection shed valuable light on the capacity, effectiveness and strength of schools around the world to contribute to the development and pursuit of intercultural dialogue. The majority of the experiences shared took place in schools which frequently faced the common problems of lack of resources, heavy workloads for teachers and limited time for innovation and experimentation.

Many UNESCO Associated Schools responded eagerly and creatively to the call for increased efforts to promote intercultural dialogue and help reach the goals of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010). Teachers and students, principals and parents, non-governmental organizations and education authorities all had roles to play. Not only do these initiatives enhance the quality of education but they give us renewed hope for a more peaceful, harmonious and constructive society.

These ASPnet good practices have contributed to the four priority areas of the International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures (2010), and thus to a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence as promoted by UNESCO:

i) Promoting reciprocal knowledge and the appreciation of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity

A sound knowledge base is a prerequisite for intercultural learning. Children and young people strengthen their own cultural roots and identity while learning more about the culture, traditions, customs and lifestyles of others. When asked questions about their culture, students conduct research, ask questions and seek knowledge accordingly. Learning in depth about other lifestyles often enhances knowledge about our own heritage.

In the ASPnet Good Practices many project coordinators referred to building bridges with their partner schools, not only working on common study themes but also on joint initiatives e.g. preparing a video, joint posters, selling community crafts or taking part in ceremonies. Building bridges was not confined to strengthening relations between young people in schools in different countries and within multicultural communities. Relations between generations, between students and teachers, between students, parents and grandparents, and between students and decision-makers were also involved.

In pursuing intercultural dialogue, students often had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge about world concerns. For example, learning more about the major religions in the world, students were able to identify the common precepts that many religions have in common.

ii) Building a framework for commonly shared values

Intercultural learning places a strong emphasis on values, as knowledge without values cannot lead to dialogue and exchange across cultures. Positive and constructive action especially requires values. Many of the good practices emphasized the transmission and reinforcement of values, in particular the concept of learning to live together in



Japanese students
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peace and in dignity. Peace-building remains at the forefront. Without peace, one cannot ensure development, well-being, prosperity or any type of future. The concept of unity in diversity as well as the protection of cultural diversity and biodiversity were common themes in the featured dialogues. The reaffirmation of identity, interest in others, broadmindedness, responsible citizenship, tolerance, a sense of justice and a commitment to sharing are all vital components of a framework for commonly shared values. Respect for human rights, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is the cornerstone for such a framework.

We have seen that teaching and learning about human rights is a major aspect of UNESCO's rights-based work in education and that human rights-based projects create a "human rights-friendly" environment which helps guarantee gender equality for girls and boys. As a human rights-based network, ASPnet believes in equal opportunities for teachers and students of both genders.

iii) Strengthening quality education and building intercultural competences

The featured ASPnet project reports underlined the necessity to include intercultural learning as an integral part of quality education. Quality education prepares students to meet the needs of society, today and tomorrow, to reduce and prevent conflicts. It is relevant, stimulating and motivating and encompasses the concept of lifelong learning. Education should not solely be geared toward academic achievement, competitiveness or economic development but should foster intercultural competencies, a creative and dynamic learning process and humanistic perspectives.

Intercultural competencies entail skills, attitudes, knowledge and behaviour for learning, working and living in multicultural societies. All of the project reports identified the need to acquire key skills to succeed in a globalized world. Students were reported as improving their communication skills and cultural awareness, including sensitivity to multilingualism. Many developed research skills in a number of areas such as developing questionnaires, taking surveys, analysing results and accessing information (on the web, in libraries, museums, government agencies and the media). The projects provided a platform for creativity and inventiveness. They placed students at the centre of the learning process, making them the primary actors through learning by doing. Students developed leadership and problem-solving skills, team work, management and organizational skills as well as a greater sense of citizenship at local and global levels. They gained confidence, self-esteem and pride in themselves and in some cases in their schools. Projects revealed the instrumental role of ICT, and young people perfected their skills in using the Internet, e-mail, videoconferencing and mobile phones. Other projects focused on the value of heritage. The importance of media literacy was also underlined.

Time and again projects drew attention to the changes in attitude which occurred not only in students, but in teachers, parents and decision-makers. A number of projects brought out the best in students including those with learning difficulties. Children and young people have become more open-minded and interested in other cultures and lifestyles and have committed to combating prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. They are less likely to judge people based on their looks, language or



Kindergarten children in Brazil listen to a story © UNESCO/Livia Saldari

religion and focus on common attributes. As a result of their projects, positive changes in young people's behaviour were observed.

iv) Fostering dialogue for the future

A number of the intercultural dialogue projects focused attention on the sharing of ideas and information on pressing issues facing the world today. Many of these concerns, like water conservation, protection of ecosystems and biodiversity, are directly related to the targets of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) and to the observance of the International Year for Biodiversity (2010). Through the exchange of views, seeking and applying solutions to problems, young people are gaining a fuller understanding of what is at stake, of the fragility of our planet, its climate and its resources, and of the urgency to act so as not to compromise their own future as well as the future of succeeding generations.

Young people are putting into practice, in their schools and at home, the call to 'Think globally and act locally.' They are embarking on projects and campaigns to use water rationally, protect biodiversity, examine alternative sources of energy, take action to halt climate change and become better prepared to face and prevent natural disasters.

Although the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures has officially come to an end, the action, projects and activities which it has generated must not only be pursued but multiplied. For example, the UNESCO-USA-Brazil project "Teaching Respect for All", launched on 18 January 2012, aims to provide a curricular framework to fight racism and promote tolerance, which countries can adapt to their respective contexts and needs. It recognizes that education is vital to achieve these aims and cultivate respect for all people regardless of national, ethnic or religious identity or gender. The project will also elaborate educational materials for addressing racism and tolerance in education building on lessons learned and good practices such as those contained in this publication. The materials are expected to be disseminated worldwide by UNESCO through education ministries and its extensive networks, foremost among them ASPnet which unequivocally supports this initiative.

At the launch of "Teaching Respect for All", UNESCO's Director-General, Irina Bokova said education was vital to deepen understanding and to protect the dignity of all, "regardless of colour, gender, descent or national, ethnic or religious identity". This was essential for promoting a new humanism for the 21st century.

The impressive good practices developed by UNESCO Associated Schools around the world should not remain on shelves or in databases. On the contrary, they should serve as a source of inspiration and as useful components for the further development of the concept of intercultural learning so that it can finally find its place in classrooms in all schools and in all parts of the world.

Due to cultural contexts and specificities where education takes place, there can be no recipe for intercultural education where "one size fits all". However, the basic ingredients as illustrated in this collection can provide a useful reference point. It is now up to each school to plan and embark on intercultural dialogues and exchanges so that children and young people can contribute to enabling the people of the world to live together in peace and in dignity.



Young boy using ICT
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Following the first two collections of ASPnet Good Practices on Quality Education (2008) and Education for Sustainable Development (2009), this third collection focuses on Intercultural Dialogue. It presents 19 selected projects conducted by UNESCO Associated Schools in all five world regions supporting an exchange and dialogue between cultures.

The initiatives presented in this Third Collection of ASPnet Good Practices were carried out by ASPnet schools in the context of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010). The selected projects illustrate both multicultural education and intercultural education in action.