

Education and Awareness Raising in the Promotion of Human Rights

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CEJI - a Jewish Contribution for an Inclusive Europe, runs networks of anti-racism education and religious diversity training in eleven countries in Europe and facilitates the European Platform for Jewish Muslim Co-operation.

As Jewish Muslim Dialogue Co-ordinator I read every day of an increase in antisemitic and islamophobic incidents. A fact confirmed last week by the Pew Report which, among other things, links a person's level of education to their attitude towards Jews and Muslims. It also suggests that people who are antisemitic are also likely to be islamophobic, two manifestations of intolerance that are to be addressed Monday, the day dedicated to Tolerance. These findings suggest, then, that education about diversity in general, as well as education on particular minorities and population groups, have to go together in order to be effective.

However, there is a danger when too much emphasis is given to the victims of intolerance.

Intolerance whether it be against Jews or Muslims, or for that matter against migrants or Roma, or homosexuals, is not a problem of the victim, but it is a problem of society at large and as such should be tackled by society at large.

At CEJI we believe that one effective way to tackle intolerance is through education and specifically through diversity education and by creating opportunities for people to learn together, and from each other and to learn about each other's religions, belief systems and perspectives

This is one of the reasons why we published the *Guidelines for Policy Makers on Citizenship Education for Diversity*, late last year, and it is also why CEJI has been working in the educational field since 1991.

Both our Religious Diversity And Anti-Discrimination Training Programme and our long established School Community Programmes are currently undergoing external evaluation processes. In both cases it is too early to make any definitive statements but the early signs are looking positive. The Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Training programme recently won the Gold Award from the European Commission in the field of Adult Education and is to be included in a compendium of good practice in human rights education in the school system, which as you know is currently being produced by the OSCE (ODIHR), together with UNESCO, the UN Office High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Council of Europe.

These evaluations are perhaps long overdue, but this is a reflection of the difficulty we have had to find funding for this type of evaluation. Evaluations that can objectively verify the effectiveness of the approach used and that can therefore help with the roll out

and promotion of the programme. External evaluation can help increase the levels of participation in such programmes and it therefore helps also to reduce the cost per student.

These programmes work through a diverse range of partners and countries at grass roots level, and these partnerships and as well as those created by other programmes, demonstrate that civil society is alive and well and playing an important role in tackling intolerance from the local level upwards.

At the moment, and across the participating states, there is some excellent work going on in the fields of Human Rights Education and Education for Mutual Respect and Understanding. Sadly, however, at the moment much of this work takes place in an adhoc way and not enough of it obtains the support of the local and national governments.

We look to the OSCE participating states, to help support the evaluation of such programmes and to show the political will that is necessary for their roll out throughout the Participating States.

These kinds of programmes, which teach tolerance and respect, as well as the value of diversity as we encounter it today, need to be incorporated into national curricula at every educational level, and teachers need to be trained to teach this topic, including in the training of new teachers. We urge you to show the political will that will enable these

programmes to be rolled out in education systems, with the full support of your governments. Only in this way can we create inclusive societies, societies in which all people are given the respect and freedoms they deserve.

Thank You.

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