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NOTES

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Notes

Thanks to Bruce Swaffield and to the staff of the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture for having invited me to this important event, providing me with the opportunity to present my organization and some activities related to education.

I will articulate my presentation in three parts: a) a short overview of CISP, which in English stands for International Committee for the Development of Peoples; b) approaches to education in African pastoral areas, with special reference to Ethiopia; c) approaches to education in a globalised world here in Europe.

1. What is CISP

The International Committee for the Development of People (CISP) is an Italian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) established in 1983, with its head office in Rome. CISP's principles and objectives are summarized in its Declaration of Intent and Code of Conduct for Cooperation Programmes. The Declaration of Intent, entitled "For Rights and Against Poverty, approaches and operational priorities of CISP " has been elaborated with the contributions of the Rome Office and of all CISP's offices in third countries.

Currently CISP has an annual overall budget of around 18 Millions Euros and it is structured through the HQs in Rome and 23 country offices in Africa, Latin America and Caribbean countries, Europe, Asia and Middle East.

In cooperation with various local partners, CISP has carried out and carries out projects in the areas of humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development in more than 30 countries in Africa, Latin America, Middle East, Asia and East Europe. The Declaration of Intent identifies CISP priority areas of action as follows: a) The right to social and economic security: income generation opportunities, migration and development, food security, b) the right to health and access to water and sanitation; c) the right to future: the rights of children, adolescents and youth and the protection of the environment and natural resources; d) the right to humanitarian assistance: emergency and first reconstruction aid; e) support of public policies on social cohesion and civil society.

In the European Union countries, CISP implements projects focused on training, global citizenship education, fight against racism and social exclusion, promotion of international solidarity, and support of initiatives to enhance the role of Diasporas in the development of their countries of origin.

In close collaboration with the Institute for Advanced Study of Pavia (IUSS) at the University of Pavia and two other NGOs, CISP successfully established the Cooperation and Development School of Pavia in 1997.

Since 1997, CISP offers access to higher education training programs in the field of international co-operation in Pavia, Cartagena (Colombia), Nairobi (Kenya) and Bethlehem (Palestine).

In CISP's view, education is primarily a universal human right; along this line our efforts are addressed towards two interconnected goals: to remove the obstacles hampering access to education of vulnerable and neglected communities and to improve education standards.

2. Education in Pastoral Areas: the case of Ethiopia

CISP gives absolute priority to education and schooling. In contexts where a large part of the population is excluded from school systems because of marginal status and poverty, CISP, with public and private partners, promotes innovative initiatives. Among them, the establishment of territorially recognized schools for nomadic children, based on the logic that “where children are unable to go to school, school has to reach children”.

Statistical data of the last ten years show that also in countries recording very good achievements in the Millennium Development Goals related to education (the second and the third), enrolment and attendance are still low in pastoral areas.

For instance, in the Liben zone, in the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia, it is estimated that only 22% of school age children attend primary school. This percentage is even lower among the girls and this reality is against a national enrolment rate for primary education in Ethiopia of over 94 percent.

The Liben zone constitutes one of the nine units of the Somali National Regional State of Ethiopia. It is located at the south-western part of the state, which, after Oromia, is the second largest one of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Livestock is the main source of livelihood for a population of about 1 million. Formal education is not well accepted by the pastoral communities, since it does not meet their needs, in terms of curricula, timing, distance of facilities from places where people is living. Realizing the difficulty of achieving universal primary education through formal schooling alone, the Government of Ethiopia has adopted “Alternative Routes to Basic Education”.

Accordingly, alternative basic education (ABE) was expanded. The ABE system responds to the urgent need for an education that suits the special needs and constraints of pastoral life. It provides flexible school hours, allowing pastoral children to fulfil their household responsibilities while still finding time for school. The teachers are familiar with the community, and understand the pastoral lifestyle.

ABE has extended enrolment in the country in less than three years (2006/07-2008/09) to over 900,000 children contributing additional 7-8 percent coverage to the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for primary education (Education Statistics Annual Abstract).

Generally, the ABE approach has great potential for reaching the out of school children aged 7-14 and particularly the girls. In the ABE centres time-tables and teaching subjects are developed in consultation with local communities in accordance with their needs.

In practical terms ABE centres are community primary education facilities recognised by the formal education system, allowing access to education to poor pastoral and agro pastoral children living in remote areas.

The main challenges to be faced regarding access to education in pastoral areas can be summarised as follows:

- The low economic status of pastoralists that severely limits their capacity to support the education system financially and materially

- The deterrent impact of mobility and low density of population that makes the building of infrastructures and social services (road, water, health, education, etc) difficult
- Inequitable distribution of educational services between urban and rural areas, as well as among districts of pastoralist regions
- Low level of awareness on the importance of education and reluctance to send girls to school on the part of pastoralists
- Occasional conflicts among different clans that arise from scarcity of pasture and water, and the subsequent displacement of families and dropping-out of school on the part of students
- The vulnerability of pastoralist areas to repeated drought and food shortage which in turn forces students to drop-out of school in many areas where the problem is acute and school feeding program is not put in place
- The demand for child labor in the various economic activities of the household
- Low managerial capacity on the part of the majority of officials and professionals at various levels of the regional education structure to execute their respective jobs efficiently

Against the underlined constraints, some strategic choices have proven to impact successfully on both enrolment and attendance of pastoralist children, such as:

- the implementation of decentralized administrative and education system at district level and the consequent reduction of the bureaucratic ups and downs
- the enhancement of community participation and sense of ownership in developmental activities
- the availability of clear policy directions and strategies
- the prevalence of conducive policy directions that encourage local and international NGOs to be engaged in pastoralist education along with the government
- the delivery of training in good governance to local administrators
- the development of strategies to improve community participation in school management
- the allocation of resources to non-salary recurrent education expenditures, in particular ABE, curricula development and training

3. Approaches to education in a globalised world in Europe

The second case study that I present is related to one project, co-funded by the European Commission under the initiative Global Learning in the Formal Education System. The title of the project, which has a duration of three years, is “Critical review of the historical and social disciplines for a formal education suited to the global society”.

The project is co-implemented by various partners in Italy, Austria, Ireland, The Netherland, Bulgaria and Czech Republic.

Through a continuous exchange between the different European NGO partners and the involved schools, the project is developing in 6 European countries didactical materials and educational experimentations of teaching history and social subjects in a new way. The overall aim of this new methodology is to promote the understanding of global interdependence, of the causes of poverty and international inequality.

Specifically the project will promote the adoption, in European schools, of Global Learning’s issues and methodologies in the core curricula of social and historical disciplines. The assumption is that a non-eurocentric vision of the global society will help to develop a new

culture of international relations and to foster a public debate closer to the global problems (primarily poverty and international inequality).

The project is being addressed towards the achievement of two kind of results; on one side the expected impact is on the teachers skills and attitudes, on the other side the main targets are the local authorities and institutions in charge for education.

More specifically the project is developing the following lines of activities:

- a survey on the state of the art concerning the relationship between school disciplines and development education issues in 200 schools of 6 countries
- international seminars involving 450 teachers addressed to develop a better understanding of the development issues and their link to social historical subjects
- elaboration and endorsement by the involved schools of new teaching materials based on subjects like history, geography, social sciences
- development in 112 schools of innovative teaching experiments in order to test the appropriateness of the teaching materials
- final endorsement of the teaching materials by the competent local authorities
- creation of a permanent consultation and co-ordination transnational mechanism among the six involved countries on the integration of development issues into the secondary schools didactical curricula.

Ultimately, the project seeks to place as “core business” of the formal educational systems the development education, which is conceptualized as “a permanent educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live”.

It seeks to engage people in analysis, reflection and action for local and global citizenship and participation. It is about supporting people in understanding and in acting to transform the social, cultural, political and economic structures which affect their lives and the lives of others at personal, community, national and international levels.

To this end, formal education has to evolve, in its teaching methodologies and approaches, being addressed to:

- foster an appreciation of the diversity of cultures and life styles
- promote mutual understanding and respect for the diversity of peoples and cultures that share this planet
- understand how humans can responsibly use of the natural resources of the earth for the production of food and non-food materials
- critically evaluate the impact of scientific, technological and economic progress
- engage critically with information and be able to recognise perspective, bias or prejudice.

4. Final remarks

The two experiences presented are totally differentiated in terms of contexts of implementation, target, methodologies. The first is about the right to education in pastoral areas and the focus is on tailoring educational activities in a way that can guarantee access to pastoral children and particularly girls.

The second experience is about European schools and the focus is on evolving the formal education system in a way that can allow young generations to better understand and manage the dynamics prevailing in a globalised world.

Should I indicate a single word to unify the two cases I would say right. Right to education, right to understand the environment, right to get instruments and tools to cope with the dynamics of the society where the children and the young people live and grow.