

International Congress

Right to Education – Human Rights Education: Shared Experiences Paris, Collège des Bernardins, June 7, 2017

Conclusions

In the wake of the *World Appeal to a New Mobilisation for Childhood* (2009) and its Congress on *The Right to Education of Children Estranged from their Families and Socially Excluded* (2011), the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE) dedicated its 2017 Congress to the theme of *Right to Education – Human Rights Education: Shared Experiences*.

Assuming that the child must be at the centre of the education system, BICE and its partners,¹

- reaffirmed the following principles:

- The right to education² is a fundamental right which is inherent to any child as a human person who holds universal, indivisible and interdependent human rights. In particular, the right to education is a transversal right which requires positive action by the State and a law protecting the human person in his fundamental freedoms.
- Human rights education and training³ embrace all the education, training, information, awareness-raising and learning activities which aim at promoting the effective respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms including, first and foremost, the right to education and the right of access to information.
- Resilience is the individual's ability to cope with difficult life experiences and overcome them⁴. It enables to awaken the child resources which sometimes are latent and to stimulate his motivation and his cognitive development. This approach completes and reinforces the educational process.

¹ BICE partner organisations with education projects which attended this congress were:

Africa: *Congrégation des Sœurs de Sainte Gemma – PEDER* (DR Congo), *Fondation Voix du Cœur* (Central African Republic), *Franciscains du Bénin* (Benin), *Fraternité laïque mariste – Cœur Sans Frontières* (DR Congo).

Latin America: *Callescuola* (Paraguay), *Congregación de las Hermanas de San José de Cuneo* (Argentina), *Fundación Emmanuel* (Argentina), *Fundación Pedro Poveda* (Guatemala), *Mesa Pro BICE – Brasil* (Brazil), *Mesa Pro BICE – Chile* (Chile).

Asia: *AAWAAJ* (Nepal), *Aina Trust* (India), *Opération Enfants du Cambodge* (Cambodia).

Eastern Europe - Community of Independent States: *Center for Curative Pedagogics* (Russia), *Iroda* (Tajikistan), *Kenes* (Kazakhstan), *Perspektivy* (Russia), *Rhea* (Georgia).

² See Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Articles 28 and 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

³ See Articles 1 and 2 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training.

⁴ Vanistendael, S., *Growth in the Muddle of Life – Resilience: Building on People's Strengths*, BICE, 2015.

See also: *Resilience: from inspiration to action – Life stories, reflections, experiences*, BICE, 2016.

- reiterated:

- Their preferential option to exercise their mission in favour of children who need more protection and guarantees for them to be able to enjoy the right to education: street children, children with disabilities, child soldiers, working children, migrant and refugee children, etc. and to pay particular attention to the situation of girls who are more often excluded from the education system⁵ and who are more exposed to different forms of violence even when they attend school.
- Their willingness to support the creation and/or development of spaces (schools, popular education centres, childcare centres, etc.) which are participatory organisations that are able to contribute to the integral formation of children and the incorporation of their families into the educational process. Moreover, it is essential to guarantee the child's right to express his opinion and to be heard in these spaces⁶.
- Their commitment to continuing to work as a network and with other existing networks at the international, regional and national levels, in particular to share experiences, to progress in the development of innovative practices and to develop critical thinking for the activities carried out to be consistent with the cultural diversity of the contexts in which they are conducted.

- identified the following areas for further development:

- The knowledge and values have become increasingly diversified and accessible beyond the formal education systems. In particular, the ability to identify, organise, understand and analyse information through new technologies is one of the most effective ways to allow millions of children to have access to knowledge, and thus to more opportunities. It is, however, important to be very vigilant on the risks associated with the use of the Internet.
- The role of teachers should evolve from information and knowledge “providers” to learning “facilitators”⁷. They should receive quality training so that they become educators who are able to teach, but also to live the values. The role of families and communities should be reinforced to the same end.
- Human rights training should be reconsidered and promoted as it implies an alteration at all levels of the education system; it also implies delegation of power, democratic governance, school autonomy and shared responsibilities.

⁵ About 16 million girls aged 6 to 11 years old will never attend primary school against approximately 8 million boys if the current trend continues, according to new data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS , March 2, 2016) - See: <http://www.unesco.org/news/filles-sont-te-fois-plus-nombreuses-que-garcons-ne-jamais-commencer-ecole-apres-eatlas-unesco#sthash.jwJipPsZ.dpuf>

⁶ See Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

⁷ See UN System Task Team, Thematic Think Piece on Education, UNESCO, 2012, p. 10.