The Central Asia Forum on Post Conflict education “Learning to Live Together”

Draft Concept note

Background

The UN General Assembly Declaration (2010) acknowledges that education in emergencies should remain a key priority for the international community and Member States. The Member States networking in post conflict situation is an open question for practitioners and policy makers working together to ensure all persons the right to quality education and a safe learning environment in emergencies through to recovery.

Achieving quality education for all that responds to the social, economic, cultural and environmental dimensions of emerging challenges requires improvements to the quality and relevance of learning contents, processes and contexts with the focus to conflict prevention and management. Under this area of work, based on UNESCO pillar “Learning to Live Together” there is a need to develop the concept of “education in post conflict situation” and assist post conflict countries in formulating and implementing policies, plans and programmes to promote it. This includes focus on human rights education; education against discrimination; the role of intercultural and gender responsive education in promoting values, education for the conflict prevention and education for inclusion of minorities. Specific attention should also be given to the prevention of violence in schools.

Meeting the needs of the post conflict countries requires collective action. Education for “learning to live together” equips individuals and communities with the principles, values and practices to build a more secure and peaceful future. It concerns all levels, settings and types of education, and must therefore be integrated throughout the education system. In 2012-2013, UNESCO’s Almaty work in this area will be focused around advocacy for peace building, provision of policy advice and capacity building for education planning and management in post conflict situation. In this area it will aim to enhance content knowledge; risk reduction and preparedness, as well as conflict management, critical thinking skills in order to equip learners with the requisite skills, knowledge and attitudes to deal with future uncertainties and challenges.

Currently UNESCO Almaty Cluster includes 2 post conflict countries (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan)- PCPD. According to Kyrgyz President’s visit to HQs for meeting with DG and with reference to the political crisis of June 2010 the following needs in the field of education were raised: support to education system with focus to post conflict areas in Kyrgyzstan (rehabilitation, conflict management, post conflict education programs and projects). Monitoring for measuring progress in emergency education and for learning lessons from experiences and best practices, are so far still undeveloped.

In view of the growing consensus on the importance of providing education in humanitarian crises to prevent, prepare and respond to emergencies posed, UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office proposes to conduct in Kyrgyzstan, as one of the post conflict countries in Central Asia, the UNESCO International Forum on post conflict education “Learning to live Together”.

On November 6, 2011 the 20-th meeting of the Eurasian Economic Integration Community Education Committee Meeting (EURASEC) was held in Astana. At the meeting the issues of quality education, national models of teaching, cooperation in the field of education and attestation of personnel were under discussion and consideration. The Ministers of Education from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan took part in the meeting. Cooperation with UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office was on the agenda of the meeting.
Ministers of the EURASEC member states fully supported UNESCO’s proposal to conduct the forum on post conflict education and decided to consolidate it with the next meeting of the Eurasian Economic Integration Community Education Committee Meeting in June 27, 2012. Participation of ministers in the UNESCO Forum will promote the implementation of joint initiatives and events for the achievement of quality education for all as an instrument of social cohesion and conflict prevention.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, National Commission for UNESCO, UN Women Regional Office for CIS countries in Almaty and the Soros-Kyrgyzstan will provide technical assistance to the Forum and will contribute to the sessions on social inclusion and gender responsive education.

Mr. Kishore Singh, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education will participate in the work of the Forum and will lead the session on the role of education for conflict prevention in international practices.

The Forum will aim to support education initiatives and collect best practices in the context of disaster and conflicts prevention from the Central Asian countries and CIS.

The Forum will:
a) provide opportunity to identify, debate and discuss priority issues in different areas of post conflict education;
b) provide a platform for networking, collaboration and seeking common solutions to problems arising in the post conflict situation

Main Goal

The main goal of the Forum is to support policy makers, community, NGOs from post conflict countries in the region to intervene constructively in the transition process from violence to peace and nonviolence.

The objectives are:

- Focus on education policies to address the most pressing issues in the affected territories, the education needs of the post conflict territories in particular in the areas of education policy, planning and management;
- To bring together civilians and NGOs from different countries and conflict regions to contribute to the facilitation of local/international peace-building efforts through education.
- To create an atmosphere of solidarity as well as to establish a region-wide network for strengthening peace movements, gender responsiveness across post conflict countries through education;
- To analyze critical educational practices of participants on peace, non-violence, gender equality issues in post conflict situation.

Main Activities

The Forum “Learning to Live Together” will include different presentations, interactive group work as well as case studies on conflicts in the CIS countries,
especially with the focus of the education policy review and needs assessment in the post conflict situation in the south of Kyrgyzstan.

Methodology

- The 3 day Forum will be organized based on formal and non-formal education “Learning to Live Together” and interactive methods which include lectures, case studies, group and individual presentations, energizers, brain storming, debates, etc. (mainstreaming gender and conflict prevention into planning and programming processes with the focus on teaching/learning curriculum, training and professional development; post conflict education management, monitoring and evaluation):

Participants will acquire knowledge and skills from lecturers/experts who are famous at international level, as well as teachers, researchers and practitioners who are experienced in the field of peace building and non-violence education in post conflict situations. At the Forum, both visual/dynamic methods are expected to be used, such as advocacy materials, surveys, direct interviews, distribution of questionnaires and other methods of observation.

Besides this, working in groups, participants will evaluate lecturers, topics, distributed materials, used methods etc.:
- What have I expected?
- What did I get?
- What did I value?
- Which were the negative & positive factors I have seen?
- What do I want to do afterwards?
- What are the main insufficiencies, achievements and benefits of the Forum?

Expected results (to be discussed with Ministry of Education, target participants and international partners)
- Recommendations on response strategies and education policy formulation in post conflict situation developed for target groups
- Theme Groups established on priority issues for professional networking in education policy development in post conflict situation with the focus on:
  - community participation
  - teaching and learning with regard to conflict management and gender mainstreaming
  - human rights, peace building and gender responsive education
  - protection and preventive education for vulnerable groups
  - education for international understanding
  (etc.)

- Advisory Board (Resources Center) established in Kyrgyzstan as a platform for national networking, collaboration and seeking common solutions to problems arising in the post conflict situation, to facilitate knowledge exchange and enhance competencies to identify, share and apply good practice

Forum location

Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, June 27-29, 2012

Organizers
International partners: UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office, (UNESCO Bangkok, ), UN Women, UNDP KG, SOROS Kyrgyzstan, other UN agencies

Participants
EURASEC Ministers of Education, CA ministries of Education, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, NGOs, national professionals and experts from CIS countries, international organizations, development partners, practitioners, focal professionals and community leaders from post conflict countries.