



CEMOFPSC ROUND TABLE: "An education of quality in the conflict area, as a way of improving peace and integration"



Interview made by CEMOFPSC

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1. In the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2011, it was declared that only 2% of the international Aid is destined to Education. Do you consider these figures enough to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (Number two) in 2015?

No, because it is technically impossible to achieve the MDG fully with that limited funding. Every country, every sovereign state, and that includes Palestine, has the obligation to educate its people, of course there are many countries in the world that are in stages of development that does not allow the appropriate resources to be re-channelled for the education system; for that, we have something called International Solidarity, an official development assistance which can help to alleviate the global scandal involving the figure of 68 million children still not going to school.

Much of official development aid including the Middle East region is in the form of military assistance. As that report has indicated if a small part of military aid budget could be reallocated to education I think we would be much closer to achieving the 2015 Millennium development goal.

2. In your opinion, what is the role that the International NGO has to play in order to ensure or at least to contribute to the achievement of this Goal?

There are many situations as governments protected by good reasons are unwilling to provide the social services that their people has the right to obtain,



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in the case of Palestine there have been many obstacles, political, military and cultural that had prevented to made available a very solid organization system.

In cases that the central government is not able to deliver the social services, it is normal that NGO should be encouraged to do it, not only in education, but in health and other social works as well, so, in this case of replacement we are talking about, international NGO are entering to a partnership with those governments to introduce new ideas into the education system.

Quite often in many parts of the world, education is something that needs to be reinvented with the passing of generations and the needs of the educational system is different over time, as the economy of the world becomes increasingly integrated and borders are disappearing, and information and communication technologies (ICT) are growing in importance, is it valuable to NGOs, academia and the private sector to contribute to the debate on education, including teachers, curriculum development and infrastructure development, as well as internet technologies related issues; the answer is yes, there is a strong need for the international aid contribution to help meeting the challenges that arise in order to innovate the education system.

3. Have ECOSOC suitable tools to co-ordinate the work priorities and the agenda of stakeholders (alignment)?

ECOSOC is a meeting of 54 member states plus the ones that are attending as observers. Once a year this group of member states of the UN holds a meeting, the individuals who attend these meetings do not necessarily have the possibility to change the education system altogether, but ECOSOC does contribute to the global debate on education, to fulfil the system requirements to meet the educational needs, and the very crucial conditional role in achieving the necessary synergies.

There are many other existing mechanisms in addition to ECOSOC such as UNICEF, UNESCO, at national and regional level as well, that contribute to achieve synergies but the job is not done, millions of children are still with no school.

4. Since you have been involved in the special education issue, what would be the key action to be taken in order to ensure education for this group of children?

As the road is progressing for achieving Universal primary education you have to admit that there are groups of children hard to reach, these are children with



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disabilities, children of minorities, children who are trapped in conflicts and special measures need to be taken for those kids.

Special education needs to be tailored to the needs of the child as UNICEF calls it in its slogan “Children first”, so children should be the first, what is good for the child is what it matters most, not in matter of efficiency, that needs to be taken into account, because in special education the number of children that you reach is much smaller than in general education. You need to tailor the education programme including the teaching one and the curriculum as well as the infrastructure to the special needs of the child.

It is hard to know the numbers of countries in the world with difficulties and Spain has taken the lead in that regard, an agreement has been reached in a record time to sign the document developed by the Convention on the Rights of people where each signatory state hereby proclaims that it has the duty to protect the educational needs of children as well.

This is a legally binding document signed by the Geneva Convention and administered by the United Nations. It is very new, started three years ago but has a very high level of adherence with a very high number of states that have ratified it already, society has become global, and we cannot leave anyone behind, and this includes children with disabilities first.