**QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

1. Please provide information on how, in your country, the issue of respect for cultural diversity and the cultural rights of each person is reflected in school curricula (legislative, institutional and policy framework, and implementation).

ANSWER:

In Italy there are not specific curricula. Each school can establish its own curricula in such sense.

The Italian Constitution invites each citizen to respect different ethnic groups. Indeed, there are laws regarding how to ensure equal treatment and human rights protection for everybody regardless of ethnicity or cultural background (Decreto Legislativo n. 215 del 9 luglio 2003, articolo 7). Moreover, school districts have been asked to apply guidelines from the National Minister of Education and Research (MIUR) to promote an effective school inclusion policy toward students from different ethnic groups.

2. Please provide information on how, in your country, the issue of respect for cultural diversity and the cultural rights of each person is taken into account in the organization of the school system and schools (legislative, institutional and policy framework, and implementation).

ANSWER:

The answer to this question is very much related to what has been already said previously. MIUR has forwarded to all school managers guidelines that are in line with Italian legislation concerning effective inclusive school policy for cultural diversity. In addition, each school can add specific procedures to those guidelines for an effective promotion of inclusion of cultural diversity in their unique environment. For example, in our school, we have about 10% of students (across the different educational levels) who come from countries other than Italy. In line with that, last year we promoted a project with preschoolers in which during the entire school year students were exposed to activities aimed to inform them of some of the characteristics related to food, household, and cultural habits from different countries like Asia, Africa, and South America.

3. Please clarify to what extent the measures described above relate not only to the issue of languages in education (in this regard, please briefly explain the context and provide details on the State language policy), but also to the arts, heritage, science, history, values and religions, or world views and ways of life, in all their diversity.

ANSWER:

The goal of MIUR is to give guidelines to schools to promote an effective integration of each person, taking into account their socio-cultural diversity. Thus, there are many attempts to maximize this goal. For example, in Rome there are events aimed to promote citizens’ knowledge of habits in other cultural contexts. There is a website entirely devoted to advertising events in Rome related to arts, theaters, exhibitions, and shows that represent different ethnic identities (i.e., http://www.romamultietnica.it/). On this website, there is a section devoted to the events and activities promoted that represent Latino culture (e.g., music festival) or Chinese culture (e.g., china film festival). Overall, in Italy there are no restrictions at school (or in any other place) about clothes, food habits, religion. Indeed, many school lunch rooms promote the implementation of food that is not just from the Italian culture.

4. Please specify the specific and particular difficulties encountered in ensuring an inclusive and quality education that allows cultural diversity and the cultural rights of each person to flourish at the same time.

ANSWER:

In Italy, as in other countries, it is crucial to make the distinction between public and private school. In relation to public school, the National Government gives funds to organize curricula that includes activities to promotes effective school inclusion educational policies. Of course, a big factor in maximizing the correct implementation of such policies is to work on motivating teachers to act with these policies in mind. The National Government devotes significantly lower funds to private schools than to public schools. Such an imbalance may be an important to consider when evaluating the difficulties that private schools may encounter in comparison to public schools in successfully implementing effective policies to promote school inclusion. However, it is important to emphasize that the curricula in private schools is student-centered. The focus is on the student and his/her positive development, within an integrative perspective. Faculty members in private schools are asked to promote the school mission and vision in all educational activities.

However, effective inclusion in schools is a very sensitive issue with many complexities. One must take into account factors such as language barriers and openness (or closeness) of the families of those students from different ethnic groups toward different cultures and traditions.

5. Have specific mechanisms been established to consult and ensure the participation of stakeholders, in particular the populations concerned and parents, for a better understanding and effectiveness of the right to education, including its cultural dimension? What place is given in this context to the voice of children?

ANSWER:

In Italy, parents and students can participate in many ways concerning which school policies are implemented. However, the age of the student dictates how much input they may have. Within schools there are committees that collaborate with the school Directory to promote and organize school activities. These activities can be related to the promotion of school inclusion policies for cultural diversity. Before secondary school, the parents of each class elect four representatives to participate in a class council. In high school, two parents and two students are elected to serve. The students of any class can assemble once a month. The parents of any class may also assemble once a month. Moreover, all the students can ask the school to assemble once a month to discuss issues of cultural importance.

In addition, parents can give feedback to the school Directory about activities and every other aspect related to the school with anonymous customer service questionnaires (ex. Especially School certified quality).

6. What recommendations should be provided to States and other stakeholders on these issues?

ANSWER:

The local Government needs to provide clearer guidelines promoting inclusive policies in regard to cultural diversity within school life. However, there must also be a movement towards inclusion in daily life outside of the school. Within the school system, it is necessary that local government invest funds in adequately training teachers, personnel, and administrators to effectively promote school inclusion policies for socio-cultural diversity. Further funds should be devoted to buy tools and technologies aimed at supporting teachers in implementing such policies within their daily teaching activities, not just in a few activities per year.

 **ITALIA**

Via della Pigna, 13a – 00186 – ROMA