

THE TRENTO CHARTER



RETHINKING
A BETTER
INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION



THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In September 2000, 191 heads of state and government leaders undersigned eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and committed to meet them by 2015. In the past eight years we analysed in depth each objective:





THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The UN Millennium Declaration was a fundamental step in the fight against poverty in its multiple dimensions because, for the first time in history, 191 world leaders shared an agenda with concrete and measurable results.

In support of the Declaration, civil society was urged to exert pressure on governments so that they keep their promises and, at the same time, to make own the priorities proposed by the United Nations. To this end, each year, from 2008 to 2015, the Trento Charter focussed on one item of the Millennium Campaign, working backwards, from the eighth to the first objective.

In the next years the Charter will address the Sustainable Development Goals approved in the UN post-2015 Agenda, which you can find at the end of this document.



THE TRENTO CHARTER

The world has changed. The Trento Charter embodies the attempt to re-read the present in order to analyse together the “cooperation for development” theme in its essential and identifying aspects. We therefore have attempted to sketch several traits that appeared to be fundamental to the shaping of the “intended cooperation”. These traits could be joined by others which, we hope, will be translated into explicit proposals for regulations in the future.

From the methodological viewpoint, the following text is the result of the joint processing that occurred between the cooperating members involved in varying ways in the international solidarity activity and that each year contributes new sections with reflections on international cooperation in relation to each objective.



The promoters of the Trento Charter





JOINING INTO A SYSTEM FOR BETTER INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



1. READING THE PRESENT: COOPERATION THAT THINKS AND ACTS

In an ever faster-moving world, featuring continuously changing dynamics, the approaches to and the procedures for intervention (cultures and tools) of non-governmental and governmental organizations in development cooperation often prove outdated. There is often no time to think one's action out or to update/synchronize the thought (and consequently the action) with the world. This calls for the strengthening of the research and training approaches in order to produce theory and enhance experiences, by creating places within and between the organizations involved in cooperation in which to prepare the intervention philosophy and the orientation of the action, starting from critical interpretation and from the communication of practices applied. These are places in which to merge thought and action as the hinges of a single, identical process. For this to come about, laws and regulations as well as financing circuits supporting them are required: a law on cooperation in association with regulations and programmes in tune with the times.



2. REGAINING THE WORLD: DIALOGIC AND NOT SELF-REFERENTIAL COOPERATION

The action of part of the world of international cooperation is featured by the inversion between means and ends. Indeed, although quite comprehensibly, organizations tend to focus on the safeguarding of their own survival rather than on social promotion within the communities. The question is: is it possible to regain a non self-referential approach aimed outwards, towards the Other, towards the world? An initial shift towards escaping from self-referencing implies the reviewing of not only one's coherence with the principles underlying one's vision of the world and inspiring one's actions, but also with the results and actual impact of one's action on reality. Thereby, evaluation, intended as verification and assignment of meaning/value, takes centre stage. The need to address the world requires a viewpoint that outlines a form of cooperation that is dialogic (in which subjects, places and languages dialogue one with the other) and dialectic (that sees difference and conflict as potential constitutive elements of interaction), where relations are constitutive





3. INVESTMENTS: IN HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Putting relations centre stage also means recognizing and enhancing the strong human and social resources in international cooperation organizations and in the territories, in which to invest with a view to exercising conscious citizenship. It is necessary to overcome the dichotomy between 'community of donors' and 'target community', within a partnership approach: cooperation means living the present, aware that contemporary challenges are effectively fought only by activating internal processes of social animation. To this end, one must engage in a 'mutual mirroring' work, so as to stamp out the borders between 'inside' and 'outside', in order to achieve social transformation both within our own communities and in those of the countries with which one is cooperating. The central position of the relationship reflects the central position of the individual, seen as the core of the concept of human development, as an individual capable of relating and that, within the mutual autonomy of the parties involved, generates change.



4. FOCUS ON THE COMMUNITY: QUALITY COOPERATION RELEASED FROM ECONOMISM

International cooperation mainly depends on public financing of development. It is without question that action without financial resources is impossible. Another obvious fact is that its dependence from public financing, to be augmented and at the same time reviewed in terms of institutional management based on a more effective, topical and balanced attitude, is proof of the political character of international cooperation. The financial bond, however, although there, runs the risk of becoming a misleading simplification that prevents us from seeing a more radical aspect of the problem. It seems sometimes that cooperation, before being bonded, 'binds' to the need for financial resources. Convinced that good cooperation does not depend exclusively on a larger allocation of the GDP, it is necessary to gauge the importance of activating local resources and of involving partner communities. Without this stage, the boat inevitably drifts in a one-way direction and towards ineffectiveness of the intervention. The ensuing risk is the social impoverishment of the communities involved. It is necessary to work in the direction of a kind of cooperation capable of abandoning the economic growth paradigm and of acquiring the idea and practice of development co-promoted by the partner communities that include quality of life parameters chosen by the individuals and communities concerned, based on their peculiar values and priorities.



5. RIGHTS IN RESPONSIBILITY: BEYOND THE LOGIC OF NEED

The world of international cooperation describes itself through the media and in the official language as a set of 'donors' of material assets (structures) and of immaterial assets (democracy and development). It runs especially the risk of perceiving itself as

such in the cooperative and solidarity action, thus generating an unbalanced relationship with the Other, reduced to and in some cases offended by its identification as essentially 'needy', non self-sufficient and not autonomous, which causes the onset of a syndrome that prevents the Other from imagining the future and of socially self-promoting itself. It is necessary to work to adjust this unbalance, to work on the implications of a relationship of mutual dependence, on the ambivalence and on the shadows of the 'humanitarian' concept. In order to work successfully, a kind of cultural innovation must be applied: the logic of need implies the logic of aid (in its more or less refined variations), to the detriment of the logic of rights. The basing of the foundations of cooperation on the logic of rights, instead, means to place the cooperative action within a political dimension, a place dedicated to addressing the challenges posed by global disequilibria and injustices. It also means to consider each territory, no matter how impoverished, as a supplier of richness in terms of knowledge, tradition and culture before being a supplier of material goods, thus reproposing the issue of the democratic re-appropriation of resources and therefore of self-government.



6. ESTABLISHING LONG-LASTING RELATIONS:

COOPERATION BEYOND EMERGENCIES AND NEXT TO CONFLICTS

International cooperation has a hard time in expressing relationships between places and faces. It seems to be in tune with our present times that in turn have a hard time in assigning appropriate value, in activating and in boosting process, continuity, construction and duration logics and prefers occasional interventions of apparently very high effectiveness. The result is a kind of 'fixed term' cooperation, marked by project deadlines, by the quantitative dimension of the many occasional relations, activated each time in the wake of an emergency. In order to redirect the cooperative action towards its final objectives, it is absolutely necessary to reacquire process (relationship) time over the project (action) time. The assumption and at the same time the fundamental outcome of this reacquisition process is the kindling of trust between the parties involved. The interpretation of international cooperation as a process of mediation and of social transformation, prior to being an intervention in aid of development, also implies the



placing of the issue of the non-violent management of conflicts at the heart of the cooperative activity. There is no development without peace. And there is no peace without justice, i.e. without the delicate contact with the direct, structural and conflictual violence that marks life, truth and the memory of individuals and places.



7. COOPERATION IN THE PLURAL: RECOGNIZING THE PLURIVERSE OF THE PLAYERS AND OF THE FORMS

Italian development cooperation is no longer the exclusive sector of the government, at institutional level, nor of the formally recognized NGO's, at non-governmental level. Perhaps it is no longer the exclusive sector of the non-profit scenario either. Other institutional subjects (local and regional bodies, universities), other non-governmental subjects (associations, non-profit-making organizations for community work, foundations, fair trade, micro credit, responsible tourism and even the world of labour, enterprises, fair economy, associations of migrants) in the last twenty years have entered the cooperation scenario and taken their legitimate places. It is now necessary to formally and substantially recognize the pluriverse of the players in the international cooperation and solidarity sectors that act in different ways and specific forms (international development cooperation, decentralized cooperation, community cooperation, solidarity actions), thus accepting the challenge of interconnection and of the search for common meanings.



8. BEYOND THE NETWORK: BUILDING OVERALL SCHEMES IN CREATING COOPERATION

A glance at the international cooperation scenario, in its diverse forms, gives the impression of a world consisting of networks of vertical and horizontal organizations that are fragmented and non-communicating, both intra- and inter-organizationally. In these networks it is unlikely to trace the specifics of the players (such as: the task of an institution engaged in cooperation, the percentage contributed by the non-governmental portion, the role played by the governments), all mixed into a blurred 'intervention' politically and operationally featuring redundancy, ineffectiveness and unproductiveness as well as structural distortions: cooperation, as aid, acts as an ointment on injuries induced, in places and in people, by that very same world that also produces injustice. It is difficult to build and reinforce coherence among national public policies as regards development, international cooperation and foreign politics. The fragile networks drawn up on paper appear as a set of dots that cannot operate together because of the lack of lines connecting them in an overall blueprint, given the plurality of languages. In order to reverse this trend, one must step back from direct action so as to open up work space and integration tables on which to trace connections, construct overall views and harmonize intervention both in terms of approach and of operations, thus moving on from the local and national dimension towards progressive Europeanization.



9. LOOKING AHEAD

SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE COOPERATION

Human life depends on the goods and services supplied by natural eco-systems. An overall view and an effective and synergic approach are key to the safeguarding of the functions and processes exerted by the environment, with a view to providing future generations with the right to achieve longevity, health and creativity within the context of sustainable human development. It is important to pay greater attention to environmental issues when practicing development cooperation, so as to restore, where possible, compromised environmental functions and to conserve integral ones. To this end, it is necessary to base cooperation programmes on a wider awareness of the impacts on the environment (such as deforestation, reduction of natural habitats, pollution, erosion and soil salinization, overexploitation of resources, for example) and of the options available for addressing them at the various space-time scales (renewable sources, efficient use of resources, territorial use planning, for example). This calls for careful integration of local cultures and traditional practices with recent knowledge and technologies the application of which should promote equal access to basic services while guaranteeing production and the chance for social participation. At the same time, it is essential to obtain positive integration and communication between the local level, where the effects of the interventions on the environment are felt, and the various institutional levels where the decisions are made and the intervention and environmental management policies are prepared.



10. KNOWING ONE'S LIMITS: EXPERIMENTAL, FALLIBLE, PARTICIPATED COOPERATION

A number of scenarios featuring greater social and cultural fragility should be approached and treated via experimental and reversible processes strongly oriented towards participation of local societies. When one is dealing with the effects of international migratory policies, with the impact of the rules of international trade, with the outcome of the action of international agencies, the capacity to mobilize civil society and public opinion in order to have a say in the final decisions of the state in which one is operating and the capacity to stop on the threshold of interference in the name of aid may prove more effective in obtaining change and sustainable human development than receiving larger funds for interventions.







ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR BETTER INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



GREEN IDEAS

FOREWORD The international cooperation we wish to achieve promotes a strong idea of environmental sustainability, aimed at preserving natural stocks, guaranteeing equality between and among generations, beyond the anthropocentric paradigm. The paths of international cooperation require a wide-angled view capable of identifying, quantifying and qualifying the surrounding environment in order to stop affecting the equilibrium of a given territory.

RISK Nature, in its various components, is man's condition of life on earth. In the near future, if we do not implement a real and urgent form of political activation as regards environmental issues, our natural heritage may be irreparably damaged. This is why it is necessary to culturally transform the "predation paradigm" into that of conservation and of regeneration of natural resources, starting from the awareness of man's fragility on earth, living in a limited space where resources are unfairly distributed. The human presence in nature features the ability to make collective choices capable of redirecting destructive tendencies.

THOUGHT Cooperation requires "planetary thought" that needs to replace "single thought", therefore capable of re-imagining the man-environment relationship in this era of inter-dependence. A sort of "mental ecology" is required, capable of freeing itself of the categories of the past and evolving the conceptual maps. To work on the cooperation/environment relationship not only means to promote better and greater cultural awareness of environmental issues, but especially to feed the underlying social imaginary, so as to generate varied representations and visions of the relationship between human beings, the natural environment and inhabited spaces (so that, for example, the world's natural habitats are recognized as being also the cultural habitats of others). In addition to thought, ethics and practice, it is necessary to re-activate the collective imaginary to see future non-predator horizons for the natural environment.

CARE The re-thinking of international cooperation in terms of environmental sustainability implies a theoretical transition from the ethics of aid to the ethics of

care. By taking on the “care” approach one recognises the mutual relationship between living beings in space (attention to and responsibility for the world) and time (attention to and responsibility for future generations), shifting from a logic of exploitation to one of conservation and regeneration of resources. The aim of the latter is to create a capital for the benefit of the community via the maintenance-renewal of ecosystem-related services and the utmost promotion of self-development of the territories.

To “take care of the world” requires a presupposition: the environmental issue, when practicing international cooperation, is not an issue for specialists but rather a transversal topic that regards everyone and all “international relationships”.

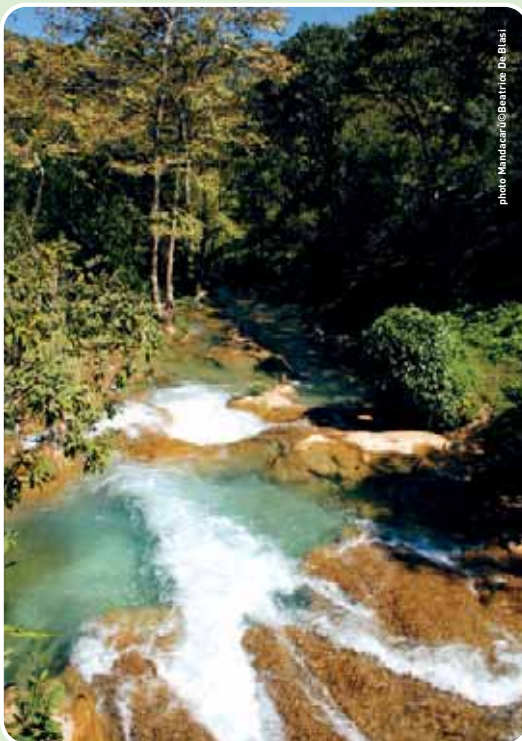


photo: Mandarino/Beatrice De Biasi

INTER-DEPENDENCE Environmental protection touches upon economic and power interests between the North and the South of the world. The solution here is not to extend or transfer an environmental conservation model but rather to revise and practice everywhere the complex relations between environment, production and development, with a view to safeguarding the local systems focused on specificity and on local natural resources. The world of international cooperation, engaging in a dialogue and not in antagonism with the world of production, can play an important role as mediator between economic businesses and the territories.

CONFLICT Environmental conflicts are topical subjects on the political agenda. They are both controversial points of discussion and occasions for creating relationships between different worlds. The cooperation we strive towards inhabits conflicts and opens doors to dialogue with the international community, the states and the territories, not in collusion with the projects for unlimited exploitation of the environment. Such cooperation instead rejects the attempts to criminalize indigenous populations or any individuals or groups that oppose the predatory logics against natural and cultural diversities. Indeed, it lives the conflict and works towards guaranteeing for the various subjects inhabiting the territory the power to govern it.



GREEN THEMES

In order to guarantee environmental sustainability, one must consider and address, in the international cooperation programmes, several ambits of action that are as controversial as they are unavoidable:

- ✓ the use of natural resources: soil, subsoil, hydrosphere, forests, biodiversity;
- ✓ the protection of ecosystem-related services (products and functions of nature that are to the advantage of humanity, such as for example a natural filtering system capable of purifying water or a forest reserve capable of quickly recycling large quantities of carbon dioxide), at global and at local levels;
- ✓ energy and environmental impact: renewable resources, emissions and consumptions, the impact of production;
- ✓ the communities' vulnerability and exposure to environmental risks (e.g.: natural disasters);
- ✓ adaptation and climate changes: desertification and agricultural soils, the dissemination of conditions that are pathological for humans;
- ✓ environmental factors and urban and rural poverty: slums, access to water and to essential sanitary services, food safety, the spreading of diseases;
- ✓ the deterioration of natural systems: the production of waste, air, land and water pollution;
- ✓ eco-refugees: the existence of flows of people forced to migrate due to the changes in climate and the progress of desertification.



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GREEN TRENDS

The practice of international cooperation by contributing to guarantee environmental sustainability requires the following stages.

To adopt as guidelines for action:

- ✓ the dissemination of knowledge and of awareness, throughout the non-governmental world, of environmental issues as reported in the international Charters;
- ✓ the strengthening at cultural level of a systemic and multi-disciplinary approach in the international cooperation programmes capable of highlighting the connections between the natural environment and the socio-economic sphere, and of protecting cultures and local civilizations as the heritage of humanity;
- ✓ the territories' re-appropriation of the theme of development and of environmental management via participatory processes in compliance with international policies, so as to prevent the risk of exploitation and the risk of resurrection of an environmental type of colonialism.

To adopt as action strategies:

- ✓ the integration between local, national and international environmental policy plans (contents of the conferences and of the international charters: Rio de Janeiro 1992, Johannesburg 2002, Kyoto Protocol 2007, Decade of education for sustainable development 2005-2014, etc);
- ✓ the opening of arenas for discourse and social participation in the territories regarding management of the environment and territorial planning (e.g.: Agenda 21 and the principles of the Aalborg Charter);
- ✓ the development of public communication concerning the environment as a topic, offering linguistically accessible and comprehensible explanations of the actions implemented;
- ✓ the introduction of environmental sustainability criteria among the requirements for the selection of international cooperation projects, also through the integrated use of tools such as EIA (environmental impact assessment) and SEA (strategic environmental assessment) on a territorial scale;
- ✓ assessment of environmental governance vis-à-vis management transparency processes (corruption, eco-mafia, etc.) and the support towards the balancing of power in the participation in the decision-making on environment and territory management;
- ✓ the creation of experimental projects in support of renewable energy sources (sun, wind, hydroelectric, etc.) and the efficient use of natural resources (water, wood, etc.);
- ✓ reinforcement of the network and of the partnership, so as to exchange good practices in environmental management, both between multiple local contexts (North

and South of the world) and between the various types of organization (local and central government institutions, universities, enterprises, or organized civil society);

- ✓ focus on integrating traditional knowledge with technological development towards a productive junction between science, local cultures and technology;
- ✓ quantification of the natural capital, so as to economically enhance the conservation interventions and to integrate the management of protected areas with local development;
- ✓ the promotion of environmental education and of good practices that enhance the chances of a positive relationship between human beings and the natural environment, even as regards its aesthetic aspects (such as responsible tourism, for example).



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BETTER INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR BETTER HEALTH

The sixth Millennium development goal focuses on the combat against diseases, most particularly against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, the ones that require more urgent attention. This requires, however, for international cooperation to stress how, in general, health means quality of life, accessibility and rights. The reinforcement of local health systems, essential for guaranteeing adequate healthcare for everyone, is the element to be pursued also in the event of vertical action on specific diseases, thus overturning the setup of the millennium goal. The result is the construction of a network of daily assistance to the ill and of general prevention strategies according to the different age groups and to the various infective or non-infective pathological conditions. What is needed, therefore, is a global intervention approach so as to ensure long-term sustainability of disease control, namely a wider-reaching and integrated approach that acts through important assumptions and priorities.



THOUGHTS

HEALTH SEEN AS GLOBAL WELL-BEING The meaning of health must be reviewed. It is necessary to start from the definition of health given by WHO that states that *health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*; to consider the various international statements, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Alma Ata Declaration; to remember the role played by social determinants and their weight in the overall vision of health. The right to health and the guarantee of access to it become a collective responsibility as well as an individual one, to which we are all called to commit ourselves. This however does not preclude the selection of the priorities and the rational organization of the services. The vision must be a global one, placing as number one priority the strategies capable of ensuring equity and equality of access to health services. The dignity of human life and the relief of human suffering are the leading principles, to be implemented via ethics and empathy and a relational approach.



A GLOBAL VISION FOCUSED ON THE LOCAL PICTURE Without forgoing the global vision, one must consider the conditions of health and illness of each individual country. Quite often the global success indexes hide national situations that are actually dramatically behind with respect to the 2015 goal. It is only by starting from the needs of the various communities and from the resources available that one can define the timing and feasibility of interventions. Health priorities, albeit in compliance with national and international provisions, must be determined at local level. Different areas can be affected by different diseases or have different requirements or can involve especially needy groups within the population and services till then considered not pertinent to the health sector, such as environmental reclamation. The interventions too must be considered locally, by bringing together needs and resources, in a transparent manner and through participation. Finally, intervention times and thus the cooperation projects can be diverse.

COOPERATION FOR HEALTHCARE TO BE DEVELOPED TOGETHER The first aim is not to cause any damage; together we must guarantee better international cooperation for better healthcare.

The supply of medical care in cooperation for healthcare must be constructed in close alliance with global scientific knowledge while also considering local and traditional know-how, with which we need to establish a relationship built on respect and teamwork. It is necessary to act not by imposing one's own model but with reference to the community's culture and structure, considering local values and priorities, through mutual exchange approaches. This is the only way to achieve shared healthcare cooperation actions that involve local communities and that build up capability from within via health education and training in disease prevention and management. Basic healthcare and its quality are made up of not only purely technical and scientific aspects but also of relations and of communication with patients and their families.

To build together also means to create or reinforce the network consisting of the various players of international cooperation for healthcare: government agencies, non-government organizations, private enterprises and local communities. Overall pictures must be created in order to build sustainable and effective health systems, to share research, knowledge and resources, to coordinate help and the various subjects in the field, leaving behind the purely vertical or sporadic approach. The aim is to guarantee the training of healthcare personnel, the quality of the instrumentation and treatments and the access to medicines, being careful not to upset the fragile healthcare systems of some of the countries.

WORK ON THE PRESENT THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE Cooperation for healthcare and the right to health come together in a global discourse on life and society, an exhaustive vision that goes beyond the emergency no matter whether

in times of peace, of war or of natural catastrophe. The vision must embrace the here and now together with the future by means of an approach that is not limited to responding to the present situation but that can protect future generations from the ensuing psycho-social and economic effects. The interventions must be sustainable and long-lasting, without forgetting their close relationship with the environment, the economy, education and the numerous health determinants.

Basic healthcare is required to allow greater space for prevention (of diseases) and for promotion (of health) by conceiving concrete measures and by funnelling greater resources into these activities. Access to health must be addressed also through its social aspect, with attention paid to the burden of disease in terms of mortality, morbidity, quantity and quality of life. Chronic diseases currently occupy a larger space even in the southern parts of the world where life styles are changing. The focus of the health programmes must also encompass any possible changes in the disease, such as the onset of resistance to treatment, for example. And finally, research must be augmented, seeing that for certain diseases research is set aside due to market trends.





ACTION

Based on the foregoing assumptions, we have identified several priority actions:

- ✓ **Promotion of health** Ensure constant promotion of health and better disease prevention and control by means of research, monitoring and, most importantly, the use of the prevention measures available for specific diseases. Prevention first avoids the need of treatment afterward.
- ✓ **Integrated approach** Action not only limited to the medical/healthcare aspect but application of an integrated and transversal approach capable of carefully assessing the effects of the operations implemented on the various health determinants (life style, social, cultural, environmental and economic conditions). It is most important that the medical treatments also encompass human relations and communication as well as the growth in competence of the patient and of his/her family.
- ✓ **Focus on community** Consider the local resources and the population as the privileged and permanent multipliers of health changes in the community and nation-wide. Pay attention to individual local realities, with health strategies that can vary depending on the context, with special focus on the countries





defined as “fragile” and having weak institutions and various difficulties in setting up health pathways. Favour the interventions in support of government and local authority activities aimed at improving already existing health systems. Pay attention to the various viewpoints of the community, such as those regarding health education and training or local initiatives.

- ✓ **Long-term planning** Launch long-term health actions so as to make sure that the interventions are based on adequate constant resources rather than on large-sized funding typical of the response to emergencies and that is difficult to manage. Action in cooperation must be transparent regardless of whether it is successful or a failure, with a view to a correct qualitative and quantitative assessment of actions and to an effective re-planning.
- ✓ **Reinforcement of healthcare systems** Without forgetting the context in which the cooperation for healthcare is performed, it is auspicious that the health systems in the individual countries be reinforced as much as possible, through the analysis of prevention and intervention strategies not concentrated (or not only) on single diseases but also on the overall health status.
- ✓ **Access to services** Guarantee access to the services for everyone, even from a financial viewpoint (considering also the social and cultural determinants). It is therefore of fundamental importance to en-



courage and sustain the governments and the private sector in the development of effective and efficient health insurance programmes that can be sustained by the poor, so as to ensure fair and equal access to health treatments. Maintain health and cooperation for healthcare within the public as much as possible, both in terms of prevention and of treatment. The most ample access to health must not mean services that are not of quality and provided by inadequate staff, instruments and drugs. In order to make sure that this doesn't happen, cooperation for healthcare must also envisage administration and management actions.

- ✓ **Good health for everyone** Reason on the needs of all the population groups and of all those who often are unable to access the services. Consider the obstacles to access for women (of which people are more aware), those linked to poverty (about which people are starting to talk), and remember the other excluded groups, such as the disabled or those with diseases linked to social stigmas, or ethnic, religious, linguistic, sexual minorities and refugees.
- ✓ **Research and drugs not dependent on the market** Sustain research and drug availability based on need and on the spread of the diseases. This calls for the subvention at political level of alternative profit mechanisms for producers that do not impinge upon consumers.
- ✓ **Human resources** Keep clearly in mind the importance of the human resources in which to invest and favour the qualification and registration of health operators so as to reinforce the country's health system. At the same time, act as a group, recognizing the skills of non-formally qualified personnel or of people without a degree and therefore of the various professional healthcare figures capable of providing adequate prevention, care and rehabilitation. Foresee incentive-based mechanisms that contrast the migration of trained healthcare personnel towards the capitals or the northern parts of the world. Interact with the local traditional healthcare figures to define effective actions sustainable over longer periods of time.
- ✓ **Health education and training** Put the patient (and his/her family or community) in the position of running the care process (seen not only as treatment but also as promotion, prevention, physical and social rehabilitation); progressively transfer the capacity to make decisions and to act from the operator to the patient and to his/her family, so as to at least decrease, if not eliminate, current asymmetries. Promote health education in order to fight ignorance and risky cultural practices. Apply training schemes for women and children based on basic hygiene and nutrition rules.
- ✓ **Cooperation networks** Avoid redundancies and enhance synergies. Cooperation for healthcare must create the grounds for local as well as international cooperation networks, bring together the interventions and integrate the various human, financial and technological forces.





INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR BETTER HEALTH FOR PREGNANT WOMEN, NEW-BORNS AND CHILDREN



PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Two of the eight Millennium Development Goals address the topic of the health of pregnant women, new-born babies and children aged under five years old, i.e. maternal and child health. Why so much emphasis on this topic?

First of all because it is difficult to accept that maternity, the symbol of life renewing itself, entails very high mortality and disability rates. Maternal and child mortality rates are still too high despite the existing consensus on the actions that would reduce them effectively, at a moderate cost (with the exception of obstetric emergencies) and with an excellent cost-benefit ratio. This entails heavy consequences, also in terms of disability both for women (including vesicovaginal fistulae and sterility) and for children (growth and learning retardations and complications). This is because these people are in a delicate and fragile situation and need special care and protection.

Also because this raises an issue of justice: there are huge inequalities in the risks related to pregnancy and early childhood, depending on where you are born and on the socio-economic group you belong to.

Finally, investing in maternal health not only improves the health conditions of a woman and her family, especially her daughters, but also has significant positive consequences in terms of poverty reduction, economic growth and increased wellbeing.



A COMPLEX CHALLENGE

Maternal and child health, and access to assisted delivery especially, is considered a good indicator of the way the healthcare system of a country works, because it requires that the entire system work in an effective and integrated way, from community actions to surgery in case of child-birth complications. These characteristics of maternal and child health testify to the importance of guaranteeing continuum of care over time

(from the moment a pregnancy is planned to the first years of life of the child), in space (from the house and the community to all the different types of care and health facilities) and with regard to resources (constant availability of human resources, medication and equipment).

This is a complex challenge and one of the most ambitious goals of international cooperation initiatives. It requires actions at several levels, regarding individual behaviours, the role of the community and the work of healthcare systems. Even within the health system, action is needed at various levels: from midwives to peripheral community networks, and district and regional hospitals. Besides, action is required in additional sectors that directly and significantly impact on maternal and child health, as is the case with education, water, hygiene and infrastructures.



POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Pregnancy, delivery and the first months following childbirth are the riskiest moments for the health of pregnant women and their children, and therefore must be given priority with a view to promoting and protecting their health in these phases. Attention must be focused on individual behaviours, the social role of women (denied sexual and reproductive rights, gender inequality, limited participation in decision-making processes), and accessibility to and quality of health care.

PROMPTING CHANGE Improving maternal and child health starts with individual behaviours that promote a good state of health. These mainly consist in practices regarding hygiene, nutrition (in particular breast feeding), prevention (vaccinations, use of mosquito nets) and birth planning and contraception, that are rooted in traditions, cultures and social relations which not always tend to protect the health of pregnant women and their children. This framework of action for international cooperation requires the sensitivity and capability to identify those areas where change can be prompted, while respecting traditions and heading for the unrenounceable target of improving maternal and child health. This also implies questioning the role of women in the context of family and society. The borderline case is female genital mutilation. Working on traditions and firmly established social roles means opening up to dialogue with different cultures and finding solutions that are as little invasive as possible, based on scientific evidence and that are also accepted by the community they are proposed to. Increasing awareness and the recognition of women rights when it comes to making decisions in a family and, in particular, about the time of the first pregnancy for teenage girls, the number of children and the interval between pregnancies should be a priority of action. This

has a twofold objective: firstly, finding a way so that each and every pregnancy is desired by the mother and, secondly, promoting healthier life styles. All these actions improve maternal and child health and reduce the need for healthcare treatments.

In the field of health care, international cooperation actions should promote the demand for care, increasing access to services while enhancing the supply of services and improving their local availability and their quality.

INVESTING IN INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITIES AND HEALTHCARE Stimulating the demand for healthcare services requires an investment at three levels: the choices of individuals and couples, the community, and the healthcare sector. At individual level, education, especially of very young and adolescent girls, is the key to having mothers who are aware of what behaviours protect their own and their children's health. Boys and young men too must be involved in this educational and awareness-raising process, so that they do not behave with indifference or shirk their



responsibilities. At community level, especially in rural areas, the albeit controversial topic of awareness-raising and training of traditional midwives must be addressed. Even though their role is debated, it undoubtedly has a remarkable potential in identifying cases with complications that have to be referred to the proper healthcare facilities without treating them.

Within the healthcare system, there is the need to invest in the education and local widespread presence of community health workers, who play a central role in giving information before delivery (prenatal examinations) and after delivery as well as in referring women to healthcare facilities to give birth to their children. Men too have to be involved in activities related to sexual and reproductive health, because the main decisions in birth planning and the use of contraceptives depend especially on them. And finally, as regards healthcare facilities, any type of barrier limiting access to prenatal, obstetric, neonatal and child care must be eliminated. First of all, economic barriers shall be reduced, with a view to guaranteeing access to delivery and pre- and postnatal care for mothers and children, providing care free of charge wherever appropriate. Furthermore, accessibility to facilities from a geographical, linguistic and cultural viewpoint has to improve.





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TRAINING QUALIFIED HEALTHCARE STAFF AND ENHANCING HOME CARE

When addressing the issue of providing healthcare services, attention must be focused first of all on the most delicate moment for the health of women and their children, i.e. the birth of a baby. The time of delivery and the two following days are the phases in which mother and baby are more vulnerable, their life is more at risk and more complex care might be needed, including a Caesarian section or other emergency obstetric procedures. In this phase the goal is as well-known as ambitious and difficult to accomplish, namely: acting so that each delivery occurs with the assistance of qualified staff, in a facility capable of providing first emergency care. If this is not feasible, the second option is improving home care.

In addition to services for childbirth, services to be made accessible and available to all should include integrated routine and emergency care, provided during and after pregnancy and by qualified staff, giving preference to women operators, who must have proper medication and equipment at their disposal. The “minimum package of services” should include prenatal examinations (including family planning activities) and those services that are necessary for a safe delivery (including maternal-



foetal HIV transmission prevention), to treat the main diseases of new mothers and babies (diarrhoea, infections...) and to guarantee a proper nutritional intake. As for the enhancement of human resources, attention shall be devoted to the profession of community and professional midwives, in terms of technical training and communication skills. However, despite the efforts that will be made for the enhancement of this role, many women will be assisted by other types of practitioners, such as nurses or medical assistants. It is therefore necessary that these categories of professionals also have access to proper training in obstetrics and reproductive health and rights.

GUARANTEEING PERSISTENCE OVER TIME Finally, actions in favour of maternal and child health face the dilemma of their own sustainability. This is an issue that emerges from the majority of the assessments made, because these actions, as is generally the case with healthcare services, cannot be economically sustainable at all latitudes. Political will and state intervention are therefore needed to ensure that these actions are guaranteed and made universally accessible. For this reason, the persistence over time of accomplished actions should be pursued more than their economic aspects, while considering, instead, the long term social cost of non-action.

Healthcare systems in recent years have been characterised by the presence of a high and growing number of public and private actors as well as public-private partnerships. Available resources have also considerably increased. Everybody's efforts and available resources shall now be focussed on actions for which there is a consensus and the scientific evidence of an excellent cost-benefit ratio. To this end, one of the most insidious and complex challenges must be met: the political one.





PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FOR BETTER INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



FOREWORD

The third of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations focuses on reinforcing the concept and practice of equality between man and woman throughout the world by means of an increasing participation of women in politics, economics and culture and in the decision-making processes regarding private and public life.

The pursuance of equality rests also on the acknowledgement and legitimization of the inescapable difference between man and woman, which should lead to equal opportunity for access to fundamental rights and to all chances for growth and development.

The progress made in this sphere is assessed by measuring the advancement of gender equality in three specific areas, i.e. education, employment and politics. The UN has chosen, as specific indicators for the monitoring of progress made in reaching the goal, the numerical ratio of female students in every 100 students enrolled in primary, secondary and tertiary (university) levels of education, the number of women employed in the non-agricultural sector, and the percentage of women elected as members in national parliaments.



THOUGHTS

The promotion of gender equality envisages the universal acknowledgement that women must enjoy all rights, just like every other human being. Based on the UN's Charter, whose provisions are legally binding for all Member States, in fact, human rights must be guaranteed for all "without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion» (Article 1). The formal concession of rights for women does not always translate into actual equality, however. This condition also has tangible consequences on the lack of development in the country where this occurs.



Indeed, it has been observed that when women participate in the political and economic life this translates into a substantial contribution that has positive effects on that country's programs regarding peace, poverty reduction and economic rebirth. For this reason, the rights of women are a priority and a transversal objective, in terms of implementation and effectiveness, of any political agenda as regards international cooperation. Without the gender dimension, the results obtained would otherwise be entirely precarious. The deep link between this Millennium Goal and those relating to the improvement in pregnant women's health and to the fight against severe diseases (especially AIDS and malaria) is obvious, and women's empowerment therefore is a winning strategy when it comes to reducing women's vulnerability in terms of health.

It would be wrong, however, to attribute gender disparity only to low-income countries, since violence against women and disparity in the treatment of women is seen even in the world's richest and most industrialised countries and may still be far from being eradicated. In a situation of international cooperation, a paradoxical situation may arise by which donor countries may prove to be more backward in terms of gender equality when compared to the beneficiary countries.

Only the full participation on equal terms of women in all sectors of social life and in both the private/familiar and the public spheres, including decision-making in



politics, will be able to generate the actual recognition of rights for women and favour gender equality and progress towards the solution of existing problems.

This necessary goal must be shared by the global community of men and women throughout the planet for it to become reality. From this viewpoint, international cooperation programs are the right vehicles for bringing about a substantial change based on continuing dialectic between North and South in the world that, while taking into consideration the different cultural, ethical and religious legacies of women and their roles in society, is aimed at achieving gender equality via the sharing of the fundamental value of human dignity, which obviously does not allow for violence and discrimination.



KEY ISSUES

The subaltern condition of women with respect to men is a global problem and has nothing to do with the richness of the country itself. A clear example of this is the lack of complete equality between men and women in the distribution of domestic work and caretaking in every country of the world.

The roots of this condition dig deep into the ethical, cultural and religious values of human communities. International cooperation necessarily must keep these into account if it wishes to have a deep-set impact on them and on the mechanisms of gender disparity that they generate, in order to reach results that are as participated as possible and therefore sustainable over the long term. Given the transversal nature of the projects addressing the development of women's empowerment, moreover, a careful assessment of the context, of the participation modalities, of the impact and of the efficacy and sustainability of the project is definitely a priority.

The promotion of man/woman equality and of women's empowerment, therefore, envisages multilevel actions regarding the roles of woman and of man in the communities, individual behaviours and the states' legislation systems.

The improvement of young girls' access to education per se cannot eliminate the persistence of difficulties regarding this issue, nor does it delete the prejudice concerning the uselessness of these young girls' attendance in school when they are expected by their society to be wives and mothers, an obligation that entails other negative consequences such as child marriages, adolescent pregnancies and domestic worklo-



ads. The lack of women's autonomy in terms of reproductive health choices and the feminization of certain diseases, such as HIV/AIDS for example, with all their demographic and sanitary consequences, are just some of the main obstacles slowing down women's empowerment.

In countries with vulnerable economies, 70% of the workforce in agriculture is female and produces from 60 to 80% of the food. Despite this, it is the women who are more affected by malnutrition due to the unequal system of access to resources. Women's impoverishment in many countries is also due to the persistence of laws regarding the inheritance of the family's monetary wealth and real estate that are discriminatory against women.

In addition to the primary sector, the percentage of wage-earning women in other sectors – secondary and tertiary – is growing, albeit slowly (about 20% at global level). Despite higher average school performance compared to males, however, women usually have medium/low level jobs, very rarely top management jobs, and usually perceive much lower salaries, a condition that persists at all career levels. Gender violence is a phenomenon of epidemic proportions throughout the world. It is observed at family, community and society levels.

The abuse suffered by women peaks in time of war or in the period of time immediately following one. The UN Security Council has promoted the implementation of special protection for women from forms of gender violence during wars, especially rape and other forms of sexual abuse (UN resolution No. 1325 of 2000), thus officially recognizing the key role played by women in the construction of peace processes and in the maintenance of international security.



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Another major problem in many countries is gender selection at birth. This is a condition that occurs in cultures that are quite far from giving equal rights to men and women and are close to implementing the selective concession of the right to life.



ACTION STRATEGIES

The international cooperation that we pursue with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment requires the following actions::

- ✓ application of a “mainstreaming” approach, i.e. the use of a gender perspective in every political, planning and executive choice of governments at both national level and in regional/multilateral systems (EU, UN, IMF, etc.), at international level and in all cooperation for development projects. This approach requires at the same time the contemporary enactment of ad hoc projects expressly aimed at eradicating gender discrimination and at promoting women's empowerment;
- ✓ creation of projects aimed at modifying gender relationships at family, social, political and cultural levels. The adoption of an integrated approach is key to the project's sustainability given the transversality of the female issue;
- ✓ investment in strategies that envisage the enrichment of educational and school processes with programs designed to develop and increase the habit of gender equality and culture;



- ✓ fostering greater awareness and pressure of public opinion on national and international social policies, in terms of education and employment, as well as of preparation of adequate resources aimed at the re-definition, promotion and respect of said policies using “gender lenses”;
- ✓ favouring advocacy actions in projects designed to reinforce women’s status in their capacity as economic subjects so that women can inherit. Another important element for local development and women’s empowerment has proven to be the granting of micro-loans to women for launching or progressing their own enterprises. Within this framework, it is important to support the access of women to higher education, even with ad hoc loans;
- ✓ investment in the education and health of young women, and of young men too, so as to create greater awareness of the risks in early pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, since these are elements that undermine women’s empowerment and that contribute to a recurring repetition of the causes of poverty;
- ✓ ensuring that women take centre stage as the key element of change, rather than take their place in the fight or relegate them to passive roles. The projects, however, should be attended and shared by the male component of the community too, to make sure the actions put in place do not become only temporary and unsustainable;
- ✓ favouring spaces for reflection concerning the condition of women, so as to identify adequate and effective instruments for their empowerment;
- ✓ strengthening the already existing networks that link intra-governmental, governmental and non-governmental projects, to avoid duplicates and to enhance synergies. At the same time, encourage and sustain in the countries the local women’s organizations, facilitating networking processes also via the exchange of good practices at intra-regional and international levels;
- ✓ constant use of correct communication, even within projects not specifically addressing gender issues, capable of stimulating and sensitizing a community with regard to gender equality, i.e. to equal opportunity in accessing education and economical and political life. It is also indispensable to monitor and, where possible, change the language and images used by the media to communicate;
- ✓ acting on the cultural, social and juridical mechanisms that allow and justify gender violence and putting in place of adequate services for official reporting and for providing support to the victims of violence.





INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO ACHIEVE THE UNIVERSAL RIGHT TO EDUCATION



FOREWORD

The right to education is already envisaged by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 26) and was included and strengthened both in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (article 13) and, as regards minors in particular, in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (articles 28 and 29). The second Millennium Goal specifically concerns minors and sets the objective to guarantee a full cycle of primary education to all the children of the world. As is obvious when comparing the second goal with the documents mentioned above or with the six objectives established in 2000 in Dakar within the framework of the “Education for All” initiative of UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank, choosing that specific outcome significantly simplifies the vastness and complexity of promoting the right to education. In fact, guaranteeing the right to education has overarching implications for all the other goals and human rights, is fundamental through the entire course of an individual’s life and involves all aspects of a truly dignified life: health, work, participation in the cultural and political life of a country, gender equality, and inclusion. On the other hand, with this goal the United Nations had set a first concrete and measurable outcome, which certainly was a priority and whose achievement could not be taken for granted, also due to the structural (economic, environmental and cultural) crisis of our time and its impact on funds for cooperation and on the geopolitical instability of numerous areas of our planet.



THOUGHTS

Education must tackle the opportunities and risks, injustices and advantages of so-called globalization. “Global” is not outside but is part of everybody’s daily life, at all latitudes, with increasingly evident consequences. We all have a right to education, which enables us to interpret and live the pre-



sent time; at the same time we all have the duty to work towards promoting it. As already indicated in the Delors Report in 1996, «humankind sees in education an indispensable asset in its attempt to attain the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice. [It is] one of the principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war».

All local and global studies and research show that development indicators and access to fundamental rights improve significantly when educational systems are effective and inclusive. Nevertheless, as underlined by the Global Education First Initiative promoted by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, guaranteeing basic literacy or simply relying on technologic or political governance solutions or solutions based on financial instruments, is not enough. We need to give back to education its transformative role, «transforming the way people think and act. Education [...] must give people the understanding, skills and values they need to cooperate in resolving the interconnected challenges of the 21st century».

The priorities which emerge from these quotations have been extensively drawn on by both the UN in preparatory documents for the post-2015 Agenda and by civil society.



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They define the educational paradigm within which we are called upon to work in the next years as actors of international cooperation, if we want to avoid perpetuating also in this field those injustices and inequalities that we try to combat. The point is life long education for an inclusive, participatory and intercultural knowledge-based society. Education is first of all a means of emancipation centred on learning processes and individuals; knowledge (including “popular” and local knowledge) as personal and collective power; social and political action as a form of education in itself. This will entail first of all an ever-stronger integration between formal, non formal and informal education, both in teaching methods and content. Lastly, a truly “global” and “planetary” education must be capable of equipping people with the necessary instruments to both understand the indissoluble relationship between human rights and environmental sustainability and act consciously and responsibly within the framework of this relationship.



KEY ISSUES

As outlined by the already mentioned Global Education First Initiative, the challenges for international cooperation in the field of primary education identify three priorities, which can be summarised as follows:

GUARANTEEING ACCESS TO FREE AND COMPULSORY PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR ALL Criticalities are essentially linked to education costs, which are still unaffordable for millions of families; the lack of teachers; the lack of suitable classrooms; gender-related discriminations; the vulnerability of people with disabilities, indigenous people and nomads or caused by war and emergencies. Also child marriages, child labour and no access to drinkable water and sanitary services in school facilities are major obstacles.

GUARANTEEING QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL As far as the promotion of quality education is concerned, central problems are the lack of qualified teachers; the lack of sufficient, updated and contextualized teaching materials; the scarcity of kindergartens and of effective systems to evaluate learning. Also, family settings characterized by social hardship, extreme poverty or violence, the absence of electric light needed to study when it is dark, language barriers (especially in rural areas) have a significant impact. These problems are present everywhere in poor countries but reach maximum levels in rural areas, especially in scarcely populated ones and distant from the main communication routes.



PROMOTING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AT WORLD LEVEL Given the need to educate today's and tomorrow's citizens, making them capable of acting in a context where it is impossible to separate local from global, international cooperation shall work to remove barriers which derive from:

- ✓ the inheritance of the current school system, mainly based on frontal educational methods, which are directive and not at all participatory, as well as distant from issues which are relevant for the life of pupils and of their families;
- ✓ the existence of outdated curricula and textbooks that often reinforce stereotypes, exacerbate social divisions and promote fear and resentment towards other groups or nationalities;
- ✓ the absence of training systems for preparing teachers to enhance interdisciplinary connections and deploy the participatory methods of Global Citizenship Education and its objectives in their teaching activity;
- ✓ insufficient attention to values (peace, human rights, cultural diversity, respect and justice) more in teaching practices – which should be inclusive, participatory and non discriminatory – than in the content of disciplines; the lack of support of Global Citizenship Education on the part of many stakeholders, including political decision-makers with roles of responsibility at national and international level.



ACTION STRATEGIES

The challenges raised by the post-2015 development agenda in relation to the second Millennium Development Goal are significant and require a dialogic approach with all stakeholders, capable of involving and enhancing local actors and entities.

In the next years, those who work in the field of educational curricula within the framework of international cooperation and strive to achieve quality education for all, shall mobilize a strong commitment at national and international level with specific political pressure actions and information and awareness raising campaigns, also supporting national action plans and significantly improving investments in primary education, so as to

- ✓ invest in specific curricula in order to eliminate unequal access to education based on gender, health conditions, place of residence or other discriminating factors. Instruments made available by new technologies shall also be used;
- ✓ promote better coordination and partnership with civil society, the private sector and the most vulnerable groups;
- ✓ integrate educational policies in national poverty reduction programmes;
- ✓ contrast the school drop-out phenomenon;
- ✓ invest in raising education quality standards;



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- ✓ favour the decentralization of skills and powers in the field of education while keeping a central coordination and direction;
- ✓ promote the new Sustainable Development goals and the post-2015 Agenda;
- ✓ facilitate the introduction and integration in curricula, in national school guidelines and in education in general of syllabuses, methods, approaches, strategies, teaching materials and instruments and knowledge which are consistent with Global Citizenship Education.

The bonds between early childhood care and primary education shall be strengthened by:

- ✓ implementing targeted economic support programmes and healthcare interventions;
- ✓ urging more equitable public spending;
- ✓ privileging more vulnerable or disadvantaged children;
- ✓ combating child malnutrition through specific programmes;
- ✓ supporting the improvement of public healthcare systems;
- ✓ promoting innovative welfare programmes especially for poorer families.





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As for the quality of learning, in the next years there will be a need to:

- ✓ invest in the training and education of teachers (with special emphasis on kindergartens) and special educational needs teachers;
- ✓ build up a new class of teachers who – within individual disciplines and yet with an interdisciplinary approach – are very clear about the objectives of Global Citizenship Education and able to deploy the related methods;
- ✓ guarantee classes which favour learning in terms of number of students and structure;
- ✓ create the conditions so that everyone has sufficient time to learn and study;
- ✓ create tailored and contextualized teaching instruments in the cultural and language settings where they are used;
- ✓ encourage teachers, economically and by means of career advancements, to work in the most disadvantaged situations; guarantee and multiply out-of-school spaces for both structured and informal learning, also by involving and training new types of educators.

Specific educational programmes are needed, not only involving teachers but also other adults in a community, so that the highest number possible of people acquire those basic skills and technical and professional knowledge which are needed for work to be dignified or for the creation of income-generating self-employment activities.

Finally, it is crucial to develop the capability to measure, control and evaluate (in itinere and ex post) the quality of education, instruments (infrastructures, textbooks, classrooms), processes (related to language, time management, teaching/learning) and outcomes.

Therefore, we will need to:

- ✓ define specific curricula and clear learning objectives, including the basic knowledge, skills and abilities one should possess at the end of each school cycle;
- ✓ experiment systems to evaluate not only knowledge but also skills, which can identify inclusive learning processes;
- ✓ implement national evaluations which better meet the specific needs of each country;
- ✓ participate in regional and international benchmarking evaluations of educational systems;
- ✓ lastly, translate lessons learnt within the framework of the above-mentioned actions into useful recommendations for future strategies and policies.



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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TOWARDS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY



FOREWORD

The aim of the first Millennium Development Goal was to achieve by 2015 an extremely ambitious triple result: the halving of the proportion of people who live in conditions of extreme poverty, i.e. whose income is less than 1.25 \$ a day; the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all, especially for women and young people; the halving of the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The results achieved in these last years in terms of proportions, mainly due to the rise in the number of people living in the BRICS economies, emerging from living in poverty, have not been counterbalanced by equally encouraging results in terms of absolute values. Moreover, in some regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, data have partially worsened and in many fragile-economy countries the gap between a well-off elite and the rest of the population and between urban areas and rural areas has widened. Another fact is that pockets of alienation and vulnerability have randomly sprung up in countries commonly considered to be 'rich', as clearly indicated by the increase in the deterioration of peripheral city areas or by the significant impoverishment of the middle classes. This calls for the reconsideration of distinctions such as between the 'North' and the 'South' of the world, since the problems have gone global (albeit with evident differences linked to the peculiarities of the various countries), the causes are complicated and the responsibilities are shared. Poverty and hunger are two of the largest challenges international cooperation will be facing in the next few years, because their elimination is an assumption and a condition for the achievement of all of the other dimensions of human development. The three components of the first Goal – poverty, employment and hunger – are closely connected. However, it is of primary importance to promote the right for food because hunger undermines man's most elementary vital functions and cancels most of the chances of overcoming conditions of poverty, exclusion and vulnerability. This, however, is an extremely complex challenge that actually includes the issues of poverty and of employment and impacts all eight Goals. The guaranteeing, for others and for ourselves, of the right to have food in a sustainable, long-lasting and fair manner depends on the questioning of the entire system of production, distribution and consumption of resources.



ces and products along the entire production chain. The system as it is generates paradoxes such as food waste (one third of the food produced in the world is not even harvested or is lost due to inefficient conservation and distribution practices or ends up in the waste bin) and malnutrition (suffice it to mention the two billion overweight individuals vis-à-vis almost the one billion famished).



THOUGHTS

Despite the strong urbanisation process on-going throughout the world, and if one excludes the emergency situations linked to armed conflict or natural disasters, most of the hungry still live in rural areas and in order to survive farm the land, raise livestock or practice fishing. Today the vast majority of the food consumed in the world is still produced via family or small-scale farming. It's the small farmers - prevaillingly women - that feed the world, and yet it is they, paradoxically, that go hungry the most.



Photo: Neil Palmer CIAT

To promote the right to have food does not only imply to ensure the physical and economic access to a sufficient, safe and nutritious quantity of food, nor to ensure its availability and stability over time, as in the FAO's "food security" definition, because there is the risk of linking the right to have food to a purely quantitative dimension, while overlooking how and where this food is produced and made accessible. With a view to providing an integrated and sustainable approach, therefore, in order to contribute to the achievement of the right to have food, international cooperation must know how to allow for a wider angle of vision that can be summarised in the Food Sovereignty concept. This implies the need to place "the people who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations" (Declaration of Nyéléni, 2007) in order to favour the shift from a viewpoint based on needs to one based on rights and therefore promote the right to choose one's own food and production system (La Via Campesina, 1996).

An increasing number of civil societies and international agencies are turning to and acquiring a new production and development model, known as 'agroecology'. Agroecology is the science behind Food Sovereignty and is much more than a mere system of agronomic techniques. It is based on the principles of sustainability, it enhances small-scale producers, it promotes alliances between producers and consumers, it integrates traditional techniques with new technologies, it defends the right of peoples and of communities to maintain spiritual and material relations with their land, to administer them both politically and socially and implies the full acknowledgement of their laws, traditions, proprietary systems and institutions, privileges local production and trade with respect to international production and trade controlled by multinationals and by large-scale retail distribution.



KEY ISSUES

In its commitment to promoting Food Sovereignty, international cooperation shall be faced with several complex sets of issues:

THE GRABBING OF LAND, WATER AND SEEDS Every year, millions of hectares of land are undersold or given to governments, multinationals or foreign investment funds for the production of food, agrofuels, energy, for mining activities, to favour the expansion of livestock rearing activities or to urban development, or for the construction of tourist complexes. This





process concentrates the land in the hands of just a few, is often the result of forced evacuations and causes the disaggregation of entire communities. It proceeds in step with the hoarding of water (for irrigation, intensive livestock rearing and fishing purposes) and with the concentration of two thirds of the world market of seeds (both genetically modified and patented seeds and traditional seeds) in the hands of just a few multinationals. The consequences are an increase in seed prices and the loss of farmers' autonomy.

FORMS OF GLOBAL FINANCING, FINANCIAL SPECULATION AND ACCESS TO CREDIT Funds for global agricultural development arrive at the end of decision-making processes that often lack in transparency and feature a strong emphasis on the role of the private sector and of agribusiness multinationals, effectually imposing the intensive industrial production model. Add to all this the effects of the financial speculation of the world's stock markets as regards food that becomes

a commodity that can be speculated on, and the result is critical effects on the stability of prices. Finally, lack of access to credit first and then to the market, the absence or precariousness of conservation, transformation and distribution infrastructures, farm subsidies in affluent countries and dumping practices contribute to the failure of any kind of small farmer-based economy.

THE WEAKNESS OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND OF THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES AT LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

The places where the future of local and global food is decided hardly ever envisage the necessary involvement of small-scale producers and of civil society. There is a lack of transparency and of democratic supervisory tools. The decline in nutritional quality standards and the criminalisation of local traditional productions (to which international commercial agreements aim), the regional agricultural policies and the national land reforms tend to reinforce an agricultural and food system that is increasingly shaped according to the intensive industrial production model, to the detriment of small-scale farming. The lack of property rights acquired by those who have been farming the land for generations but have no documents shielding them from expropriation due to the uncertainty of land law, and the lack of systems for the safeguarding, promotion and support of young people and women wishing to become farmers, complete the picture.

LACK OF TRAINING AND OF INFORMATION The structures, systems and locations necessary for locally and globally disseminating agroecological practices are missing. Formal education (schools, universities, research) is still highly focused on the intensive industrial production model. There are no occasions for exchange and self-training among small-scale producers and between producers and consumers. Even the largest food consumers at global level, namely the citizens of the wealthiest countries, are key figures in the promotion of food rights, but they possess insufficient or excessive or excessively complex information and are thus incapable of arriving at informed consumption policies. Often enough, the price of a product is the only indicator that triggers purchase.

POLLUTION, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND THE LACK OF RESILIENCE REQUIRED TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGES

Global industrial farming production is one of the major sources of polluting and climate-changing emissions on the planet. Land consumption has reached extremely high levels due to erosion, compacting, soil sealing (due to





Photo © Tran Vinh Nghia Undp

concrete, asphalt, etc.), salinization, erosion of organic materials and of nutrients, acidification and pollution. The impact on the loss of biodiversity is also unsustainable and depends mostly on man's destructive action on natural habitats.



ACTION STRATEGIES

In coming years, those who today work in the field of food rights within the framework of international cooperation and aim at Food Sovereignty at all latitudes, will be called to mobilise strong commitments at national and international levels for the support of action plans aimed at:

UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL CONTEXT SO AS TO IDENTIFY AND STOP LAND AND WATER GRABBING Support of public participation processes, even via the officialisation of community property titles, and working in line with international agencies for the implementation of directives safeguarding the land.

SUSTAINING LOCAL PROCESSES Putting in place of international cooperation actions capable of reinforcing the autonomous negotiation capacities of small-scale producer organisations, of increasing the value of local resources and knowledge (different types of expert technical knowledge: agronomic, economic, juridical, etc.) and of promoting synergy between right-defending actions promoted by different lo-

cal communities, including sustainable resource (land, water, seeds, energy) management solutions. Participation in the processes aimed at reinforcing the skills and power of farmer movements and of local communities and the promotion of new shared goods management methods.

PROMOTING STABLE MARKETS, GIVING PRIORITY TO LOCAL ECONOMIES AND LOCAL TRADE

Streamlining of the development and economic sustainability of decentralised markets and production and supply chains. Local support of policies for local public bids for tenders independent of international trade agreements. Facilitating access of producers to infrastructures for conservation, transformation and sale within their own country and with foreign countries. Introduction of suitable and sustainable agricultural technologies, reinforcement of complementarity with handicrafting. Sustaining virtuous migration and sustainable investment of remittances, in order to contribute to the reinforcement of farmer families and not to their depletion. The approach should be more centred on rural/territorial systems and on their relationship with cities and regional production and supply chains.

SAFEGUARDING THE BIODIVERSITY AND THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLES TO USE GENETIC RESOURCES

Promotion of actions that protect, respect and ensure the management of local community biodiversity; that guarantee the farmers' right to conserve, use, exchange and sell their seeds





and their animal species and that protect them from biopiracy; that make sure that fishing communities continue to play a central role in the management of seaways and waterways.

PROMOTING THE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES IN ORDER TO CONTRAST CLIMATE CHANGE Boosting study and application of low climate impact agrifood technologies that are easily accessible to and repeatable by small-scale producers.

CALLING INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, STATES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO GUARANTEE FULL PARTICIPATION Small-scale producers, sector operators and consumers must have a say in the decisions regarding food and agriculture. Governments must reinforce the role of international agencies, firstly via the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) as a central and inclusive inter-governmental platform for the global governance of food.

CREATING, HERE AND ELSEWHERE, ALTERNATIVE AGRIFOOD NETWORKS AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Promotion of markets based on solidarity and fair prices, reinforcement of the relations between producers and consumers, between urban and rural areas. Sustaining a new food culture based on the consumption of seasonal, local and high quality products and on a lower demand for meat and animal products. Reduction of losses and waste along the production chain and the forbidding of public incentives for agrofuels that compete with food production.

SUSTAINING A REFORM OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCE AND TRADE

Creation of higher awareness regarding the fatal effects of international trade agreements and of the global finance system damaging the decision-making powers of producers and the sustainability of local markets. Sustaining the application of a tax on financial transactions. The opening of spaces for dialogue and exchange outside and inside international institutions, also with the private sector and with multinationals, leaving aside prejudicial ideologies and instrumentalization, so as to create opportunities for the common good.

SUSTAINING LOCAL PUBLIC POLICIES IN FAVOUR OF AGROECOLOGY

Both at national and local administration levels, through the support of the interests of local partners and in line with other local stakeholders, one must promote the creation of a legal framework (land reforms, land development plans, incentives, education, taxation, etc.) in favour of the development of agroecology, of local markets and of small-scale sustainable production. To move in this direction means to exploit the capabilities, already found among small-scale producers, of giving life to and of practicing mutual support systems at community level.

SUSTAINING PROCESSES THAT LEAD TO THE CULTURAL ENHANCEMENT OF THE ROLES OF FARMER AND OF AGROECOLOGY

Today, the farming trade is undervalued and agroecology is largely unknown at all levels. One must invest in various sectors such as education and raising of awareness regarding food systems and food production chains; support of training courses, promoting an increasingly closer tie between university education, research, innovation and family farming, as well as between farmers and consumers. Promotion of community education initiatives outside the confines of schools and academia, capable of attracting individuals of all levels: children, parents, citizens, individuals with responsibilities in artistic/cultural, scientific, economic and political sectors.





THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In 2015 the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda: seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that continue the work of the Millennium Development goals and form the basis for the new international cooperation framework:



LA WORLD SOCIAL AGENDA [WSA] Promoted by Fondazione Fontana Onlus, WSA is a programme of events, appointments, workshops and initiatives for the civil society, schools and local authorities of the Veneto and Trentino-South Tyrol regions in Italy. Each year its intention is to promote thoughts and indicate actions for a new global citizenship and more sustainable human development.



The initiatives of the World Social Agenda in Trentino have been accomplished with the contribution of:



THE AUTONOMOUS
PROVINCE
OF TRENTO



The Autonomous Region of
Trentino-Alto Adige/South Tyrol



THE MUNICIPALITY
OF TRENTO



FONDAZIONE
CASSA DI RISPARMIO
DI TRENTO E ROVERETO

THE PROMOTERS OF THE TRENTO CHARTER The Trento Charter for Better International Cooperation stems from a participatory route travelled by institutional and non-governmental players in international cooperation, which started in Trento within the framework of the initiatives of the World Social Agenda.

Promoters of the Trento Charter are:



**fondazione
fontana**



WWF



MANDACARI
altregrazie



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Comitato per la promozione
alla Cooperazione Internazionale
Trentino - South Tyrol
for International Cooperation



Progetto della Fondazione
Opera Campagna dei Caduti,
promossa dal Comune di Trento
per la Pace e i Diritti Umani

Provincia autonoma di Trento

We also thank for their contribution to the Charter:
Ctm altromercato, Councillorship for international solidarity
of the Autonomous Province of Trento and FOCSIV.

Download the Trento Charter from the website www.unimondo.org

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