UNESCO's Mobile Training Team Project
Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability
Theme: Education for Intercultural Understanding (by Joy de Leo)

Terms of Reference:

- Develop a training guideline for teacher educators to incorporate Intercultural Understanding into the teacher education curriculum;
- Include contents on Intercultural Understanding, hands-on activities to incorporate those contents into curriculum, and list of references and resources;

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1 INTRODUCTION – How does Intercultural Understanding fit within ESD?

In attempting to reorient Teacher Education to address Sustainability, it is important to understand the role of Intercultural Understanding in Education for Sustainable Development, and why it is important to promote understanding among cultures for ensuring a peaceful, just and sustainable world. However, the issue of intercultural understanding cannot be addressed in isolation, separately from other important concerns that affect societies.

Humanity is facing multiple, complex problems that are interdependent at all levels; local, national, regional and global. Every problem or issue has multiple interlinked dimensions that may be political, social, economic, technological, environmental or cultural, and cannot be solved simply from one perspective. With the advent of globalization, economic, political and technological considerations have mostly dominated, while socio-cultural and environmental implications have received a lower priority. We are now experiencing the consequences of this imbalanced approach, in terms of environmental degradation and increasing social conflict, both within and beyond territorial borders, accompanied by economic turmoil due to greed and excess.

The inter-related nature of global issues was acknowledged in UNESCO’s Integrated Framework of Action for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, declared by Ministers of Education in 1994, and more recently in the International Implementation Scheme (IIS) for the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for 2005-2014. ESD therefore promotes a holistic, trans-disciplinary and integrated, values-based approach to education, within the broader context of socio-cultural, economic and environmental factors and the socio-political issues of equity, poverty, democracy and quality of life.

The International Implementation Scheme for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005) outlines three spheres of action and learning for sustainable development, namely:

- Environment (i.e. natural);
- Society (including politics), and
- economy

which are interconnected through culture as the underlying fourth dimension.

The theme of intercultural understanding and respect for cultural diversity falls within the social dimension of peace, equality and human rights, underpinned by the cultural context, within and through which learning occurs, and which forms the basis for inter linkages between the various sustainability dimensions (i.e. socio-political, environmental and economic). Within the International Implementation Scheme (IIS) for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the value of respect is seen as central to all aspects of sustainable development; respect for self, for others and for all life on Earth.

In summary, this means that in order to learning to live together peacefully, sustainably and in harmony with other cultures, we also need to ensure that social and economic justice and human rights are maintained, as conflict is often the result of injustice. This also applies to environmental sustainability, since responsible and equitable use of the world’s resources is more likely to lead to reduced local, regional and global conflict. Where war and conflicts do occur, cultural practices and artefacts are lost or destroyed, the social and economic infrastructure is disrupted, and the natural environment is also severely degraded in the process.
Please see Figure 1 below which is a diagrammatic representation of the multiple aspects of sustainability mentioned previously.

![Diagram of sustainability](image)

*Social, political, economic and natural (i.e. environmental) dimensions of sustainability occur within CULTURAL contexts*

Figure 1 – A diagrammatic representation of the various dimensions of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Described briefly below are some of the ways in which culture is linked with the three inter-related dimensions of sustainability; environment, society and economy.

**Environment**
There are interdependent links between how cultures shape the environment, and how the environment shapes culture, meaning that biological, cultural and linguistic diversity go together as distinct but closely related aspects of the diversity of life on Earth. The loss of biodiversity in recent times is accompanied by a rapid loss of cultural and linguistic diversity, and the valuable indigenous knowledge of the environment that goes with them. This is particularly the case for example, when large tracts of forest, where minority ethnic groups may live, are cleared for the timber industry, or to make way for economic or residential development. Cultural, linguistic and biological diversity are therefore inextricably linked and face common threats.

The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity considers that cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature, so much so that a new word has been coined to describe this symbiosis: 'bio-cultural diversity'. Culturally diverse ways of knowing, doing, being and problem-solving are vital for supporting the search for innovative ways of living sustainably together with finite resources and a fragile planet. For these reasons, understanding and preserving diverse cultures must be central to ESD.

**Society**
The social dimensions of ESD relate to the need for individuals and societies to live and work together peacefully, with justice, equity, care and respect for human dignity and rights. This requires people of diverse cultures to understand and respect each other, and to treat each other equitably and inclusively, whether within or between nations. This involves understanding how conflicts, colonisation, political regimes, discrimination, globalisation and power relationships have impacted on the human rights and circumstances of diverse cultures, faiths, and indigenous peoples. Learners would need to become aware of current conflicts between cultures and faiths and those of the past, and learn conflict resolution skills for peace, reconciliation and forgiveness.

In culturally diverse societies with a history of migration, or with pre-existing indigenous peoples or ethnic minorities, this entails mutual understanding, non-discrimination, respect for difference, inclusion and equal opportunity, regardless of race, culture, gender, language or religious or political beliefs. It is difficult for a society without equity or justice to remain peaceful or socially cohesive. Without peace or harmony, economic and environmental sustainability are also threatened.

When human rights are not observed and injustices occur, peace and harmony are disturbed both within the community or nation, but also within the region and beyond. The only way that peace may be maintained both locally and globally, is for human rights, justice and equity to prevail in all societies and across nations. The recognition of cultural difference and the right of all cultures to be expressed equally, extend beyond the local or national context to global forms of communication and the media. Learners need to be aware of the processes of cultural homogenisation due to globalisation and ICTs. If children do not see their culture reflected in the media, on the internet or in other forms of communication, it is difficult to maintain cultural pride, and it is easier to believe that the dominant culture is superior. Teachers must try to counter this in the classroom while also modeling respect for all cultures.

Economy
The economic dimension of sustainability is also closely linked with society, culture and the environment. We need to understand how economic globalisation has affected diverse cultural groups inequitably, leading to wealth and information gaps, injustice and poverty. A healthy economy with enough for everyone will have a greater capacity for development that is socially and culturally inclusive and environmentally sustainable. Economic action for survival tends to sacrifice both equity and the environment out of necessity, and sometimes also out of greed and political expediency. ESD promotes economic justice and equity, regardless of race, culture, gender, language or religious or political beliefs, to ensure enough for all while preserving culture and the environment.

Globalization has become a threat to many cultures and languages, necessitating urgent action to stem the rapid loss of languages and cultural knowledge. Globalisation has brought the values, products, practices and behaviours of other globally dominant cultures to the doorstep of almost every child on the planet, challenging family values, local practices and traditional cultures and beliefs. This not only undermines the local culture but also reduces the capacity of the local community to market and sell their own products and artefacts. The strengthening of cultural identity and heritage must therefore also be linked to productivity and sustainable development. Societies that are unable to withstand the onslaught of globalization, risk losing their language and the culture and knowledge that go with it. Unless local cultural heritage and identity are strengthened, linked to social and economic development, minority cultures cannot remain sustainable. Cultural, linguistic and biological diversity, will subsequently be significantly reduced.
Intercultural Understanding within the ESD context is therefore also about understanding the interconnectedness between cultural diversity, peace, human rights and sustainable development.

2 Understanding Culture – What is culture?
UNESCO’s Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) defines culture as “the spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a social group” including the values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, customs, traditions, practices, identity, lifestyle, language and religious faith of diverse peoples.

Culture is reflected in our language and colloquial expressions, dress, food, laws, heritage, history, technology, and the values or attitudes that are reflected in our conversations and relationships, in the ways we relate to each other as family and friends, and in the way we do things. It is also expressed in the arts, in music, dance, theatre, architecture, literature and in the festivals we celebrate. Many of these determine the face of sustainability in each society, and therefore also form the basis for the content of a curriculum in intercultural understanding.

While culture may be highly visible, it may also be difficult to see, because it shapes the way we think and provides a filter through which we perceive the world, reflecting our values, beliefs and attitudes. It is reflected in our ways of knowing, doing, being and living together. Culture is a total way of life and is so inextricably woven into our identity and who we are in everyday life, that we are often unaware of it. For this reason, it can sometimes be difficult to understand those who are different from ourselves, to the extent that we may even fear them or perceive them as a threat to our cherished way of life.

To integrate Intercultural Understanding within curricula, a broad definition of culture is adopted which includes the whole experience of life in all its dimensions, as follows:

- **physical** – cultural practices and what people do
- **intellectual** – traditional knowledge and diverse ways of knowing
- **emotional** – diverse ways of expressing emotions (e.g. grief)
- **spiritual or religious** – beliefs, practices, cosmology
- **aesthetic** – art, music, dance, concept of beauty etc
- **linguistic** – languages spoken
- **social** – social issues faced by diverse cultures, equity/inequity, human rights, disadvantage, discrimination, experience of social conflict and harmony
- **political** – diverse political systems
- **historical** – the history of cultures, migration, colonisation, experiences of disadvantage and marginalisation, war, conflict and peaceful co-existence
- **power relations** - disadvantage, injustice, minorities, marginalisation
- **moral/ethical** – differences and similarities in values across cultures

In the past, it may not have been as important to foster intercultural understanding or to affirm, strengthen, celebrate and develop pride in one’s own cultural identity and heritage through schooling, because learners were surrounded by their culture in every aspect of their lives. Cultural values at home, in the community, in places of worship and at school were consistent. Cultural artefacts were familiar and were a part of daily life. Standards of behaviour were well known and were transmitted consistently to children both at home and at school. In this situation, children in dominant cultures were secure and confident of their culture due to limited exposure to cultural
difference. However, this experience may not have been shared by cultural minorities, due to discrimination, neglect and limited opportunities to express and affirm their own culture.

The situation is very different today, as children are exposed to other cultures constantly within their own community and through the presence of the media, necessitating education in intercultural understanding to strengthen their own culture and to gain deeper understanding of others.

3 Cultural Context – Diversity in the Asia Pacific Region

Throughout human history peoples have migrated, traded, conquered, sought refuge and interacted with other cultures both near and far. The Colonial period further increased contact between peoples, as predominantly European powers (i.e. British, Dutch, French, Spanish, Portuguese) established colonies throughout the Asia Pacific region, often dominating and displacing indigenous and local cultures and imposing their socio-cultural, religious, political, economic and linguistic structures on the local populations in the process. However, never before has the intermingling of cultures been quite as extensive as it is now.

Over the past few decades, the processes of economic globalization, combined with rapid advances in information and communications technologies and more rapid forms of transport, have brought us closer together, thereby increasing interconnectedness. Such close links and communication between peoples and cultures, could potentially bring greater understanding, international cooperation and knowledge-exchange, forging greater levels of interdependence, harmony and improved human relations. Unfortunately, the opposite has occurred in many cases. Increases in intercultural exchange have sometimes led to a rise in racial, social and religious tensions, increasing intra-State and inter-religious conflicts, discrimination and intolerance, threatening peace, human rights and security.

Through the processes of globalization, and advances in information and communications technologies and transport, diverse peoples, ideas, products, cultures, faiths and languages are being transmitted to every part of the globe. The increasing closeness and proximity of cultural diversity, beamed through the culture of the screen, on the internet, in movies and on television, challenges traditional and local cultures more than ever before. While the growth of information and communication technologies and the media have the potential to improve communication and understanding, they also give rise to new threats and inequalities, such as a growing digital divide and the loss of linguistic and cultural diversity furthering cultural standardization, as the English language and Western cultures dominate the screens and internet.

“As nations and cultures become ever more entwined, education systems must give priority to:

developing intercultural education as an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence, in a spirit of respect for values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace; promoting social cohesion through education, through the development of citizenship education programmes, emphasizing core values (e.g. pluralism, human rights, tolerance, participatory democracy, equality of opportunity, justice).” (UNESCO in a Globalizing World, April 2000, p. 4)

The Asia Pacific Region is the most culturally and racially diverse region in the world, containing a rich diversity of languages, religions, ethnicities and heritage. It is also the most populous and fastest-growing region of the world, containing 65 per cent of the world’s population, and over 30 per cent of the earth’s land area, and representing over 30 per cent of the world economy.
The vast cultural, linguistic and religious diversity we enjoy in the Asia Pacific region, sometimes has us co-existing harmoniously, and at other times not. In addition to mainstream cultures, there are many minority ethnic groups and indigenous cultures that are endowed with valuable local knowledge, skills and cultural practices which have inherent benefit and may also provide sustainable sources of income for these communities. In some countries there is more cultural diversity than in others (e.g. Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines) due to their history, geographical location or their desirability as a migration destination. Other countries are relatively mono-cultural (e.g. Korea, Japan). However, even in countries that have one dominant culture there may be minorities of which learners are largely unaware (e.g. Dalits, Sikhs and Muslims in India; Hwakyos in Korea; Buraku in Japan). Yet others may be in conflict with neighbours over territory or struggles for independence (e.g. India and Pakistan, China and Taiwan).

In many countries throughout the Asia Pacific region, there may be one predominant language and culture alongside other less dominant or minority cultures. This situation has come about due to colonization and the many migrations and people movements that have occurred over the centuries as peoples left their homelands in search of safety elsewhere, due to famine, conflict or natural disasters. Many times a colonizing culture would superimpose itself on the pre-existing or indigenous cultures, to become the dominant cultural and linguistic force. In some cases, the migrating peoples became the dominant force, and in others they became cultural minorities within their adopted country, sometimes living alongside each other in relative harmony.

There are cases throughout the Asia Pacific region where there are issues between cultures or faiths living alongside each other mostly within national borders, but sometimes in adjoining countries, that are being addressed in a variety of ways. For example:

**Australia:** Discrimination against Aboriginal people, migrants and refugees and attempts at reconciliation and community harmony.

**China:** Contested political and legal status of Taiwan.

**Fiji:** Discrimination against Indian Fijians.

**India:** Discrimination against Dalits, Sikhs and Muslims, and conflict with Pakistan.

**Indonesia:** Ill treatment of West Papuans and of Christians in Ambon.

**Iran:** Persecution of Bahá’í religious minority.

**Japan:** Discrimination against outcast hereditary occupational groups known as ‘Buraku’, and also the ethnic minorities, Ryukyuanas and Ainu, and residents of Chinese and Korean descent.

**Korea:** Discrimination against Hwakyos in Korea.

**Malaysia:** Discrimination against Malaysian Chinese and Indian minorities and attempts to recognize original peoples, Orang Asli and Negritos.

**Myanmar:** Ill treatment of ethnic minorities.

**New Zealand:** Recognition of Maoris and discrimination against migrants and refugees.

**Philippines:** Attempts to give recognition and equal participation to sea-based and highland-based tribal groups, and conflict with Muslim minorities in Mindanao known as ‘Moros’ living in a predominantly Christian country.

**Sri Lanka:** Discrimination against Tamil minorities.

**Thailand:** Attempts to protect the culture of indigenous hills tribes in the north, and conflicts with Muslim minorities in southern border regions.
Strategies for addressing cultural conflict may range on a continuum from military action or active oppression at one end, to harassment, discrimination, neglect, tolerance and finally to the active protection and promotion of minority cultures and their full range of rights, including the teaching of their language and culture, at the other end of the spectrum.

Nonetheless, it is in the Asia Pacific region that there is potential for developing a model approach to intercultural and interfaith understanding, based on mutual respect for diversity, and unified action for the common purpose of a peaceful, just and sustainable world through shared values. Values such as: respect, justice, dignity, peace, cooperation, equality, freedom, responsibility, tolerance, solidarity and dialogue that are drawn from international human rights instruments and other relevant documents (see section below on International instruments). Teachers and their learners need to become familiar with these documents.

All cultures have the potential to learn from each other in different ways and to contribute to the heritage of humankind from which we may all benefit. Intercultural understanding in education plays an important role in ensuring that we benefit from cultural diversity instead of it being a source of conflict. In the classroom, teachers need to design their approaches to Education for Intercultural Understanding in ways that are relevant to the local intercultural context, while also addressing broader national, regional and global intercultural issues.

4 International Instruments and Reports relevant to Intercultural Understanding

For over 60 years, the United Nations has encouraged global dialogue on common goals and shared values, beginning with the establishment of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). These were followed by numerous international declarations, conventions, reports and treaties on issues ranging from human rights, social and economic justice, equality, peace, tolerance, diversity, international understanding, environmental conservation, sustainable development and climate change among many others. From this dialogue has emerged an international consensus around a set of shared, or universal, global values, that are repeatedly expressed in these documents and which contribute to building a peaceful, just, humane and sustainable world.

The most prevalent among these global values is that of ‘respect’, which is essential for intercultural understanding and central to Education for Sustainable Development, and is common to many cultures. It is possible for both local and global values to co-exist in complementary ways, especially since respect for diversity is accepted as a shared global value. While the global values in numerous international agreements potentially provide the basis for living together on this planet peacefully, humanely, equitably and sustainably, they do not however, replace individual personal, cultural, religious or national values, that are best agreed to by convention or consensus to suit the local context.

Among these documents are many international agreements which acknowledge the equal rights of all peoples to practice their culture, language and religion. The maintenance of culture, with all that this entails, including language, faith, values and practices, is a human right that is repeated in all human rights documents. It may be found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 27, UDHR, 1948), which states that “everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.” It may also be found in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 15); which recognizes everyone’s right to take part in cultural life; and in the International Covenant on Civil
Article 26 of the UDHR also outlines the role of education in intercultural understanding, stating that “Education shall be directed to…respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups.” This is re-endorsed in Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which states that:

“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups.”

The right to freely practice one’s culture is emphasized in all human rights documents. For example, Article 4 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National, or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992) calls upon States “to take measures enabling persons belonging to minorities to develop their culture.” Most relevant for teachers is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), which affirms the rights of children to respect their own cultural identity, language and values, and to enjoy their own culture, practice their religion, and use their own language. (Articles 29 and 30). Article 29 (c) of the Convention states that education should be directed to the “development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own.” This principle is expressed even more strongly in Article 30 of the Convention which states:

“In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous, shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his/her group, to enjoy his/her own culture, to profess and practice his/her own religion, or to use his/her own language.”

Education systems, schools and teachers are therefore responsible for strengthening the child’s cultural identity and values, while also promoting respect and understanding for the culture of others. Teachers should particularly familiarize themselves with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, since there are many provisions in the Convention that are relevant to their work, and which emphasise the rights of the child to:

• be protected against all forms of discrimination;
• preserve identity, freedom of expression, thought and religion;
• have access to information and material from diverse sources;
• ensure safety and social, spiritual, moral, physical and mental well-being;
• continuity of ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background; and
• equality of opportunity and equal access to education.

Article 29 of the Convention further states that education should prepare the child for “responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance and friendship among all
peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.” This represents the essence of education for intercultural understanding.

The Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights (1996) affirms the equal rights of all language groups to be recognised as a member of a language community; to use one’s own language in public and in private; to have access to education about one’s own language and culture and about other cultures; and to have an equitable presence of their language and culture in communications media. The expression of these rights should not however, hinder integration into the broader community, nor hinder the rights of others to their own language and culture. This Declaration also contains a section that specifically addresses the role of education in:

- fostering capacity for linguistic and cultural expression;
- maintaining and developing languages spoken by the language community;
- providing opportunities for all learners to learn any language, including their own and that of the broader community;
- in promoting linguistic and cultural diversity, and harmonious relations in society; and
- providing trained teachers, appropriate books and learning resources, equipment and facilities.

There is also a large suite of documents pertaining to non-discrimination on many grounds, such as culture, language, race, gender and disability. Among them is the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969), which affirms the necessity of speedily eliminating racial discrimination throughout the world in all its forms, and of securing understanding of and respect for the dignity of the human person. The Convention states that “discrimination between human beings on the grounds of race, colour or ethnic origin is an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among nations and is capable of disturbing peace and security among peoples and the harmony of persons living side by side, even within the same state.”

The UN Convention against Discrimination in Education (1962) re-affirms the UDHR principles of non-discrimination; the right of equal access for all to education and equality of educational opportunity; the right of minorities to the use of and teaching of their own language; and the role of education in promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups.

There are also three international documents that relate specifically to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities, which recognize the injustice and discrimination that they have suffered, and reaffirm their social, cultural and political rights, stating that “respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment” (1992). The relevant documents are as follows:

- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (1992)
- Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169)
- Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (2006)

UNESCO’s Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) seeks to promote awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity, by humanizing globalization, making it more culturally sensitive, believing that inter-cultural understanding is the best guarantee of peace. It raises cultural diversity to the level of “the common heritage of humanity” making it an ethical imperative which accompanies
respect for human dignity. A high value is placed on cultural identity and cultural heritage in all its forms, which the declaration states “must be preserved, enhanced and handed on to future generations.” The Declaration states that “we are distinguished and united by differences and similarities. Such diversity challenges our intellect and emotions as we learn to work and live together in harmony.” Teachers should therefore expose learners to both cultural similarities and differences and guide them towards appreciation of diversity.

The Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, chaired by Perez de Cuellar and entitled: Our Creative Diversity (1995), not only promotes the intrinsic value of culture for its own sake, for socio-cultural development and for the heritage of humanity, but also promotes the instrumental value of culture as a productive good which fosters economic growth and development. The report addresses the need to strengthen cultural heritage due to the erosion of culture and traditional values caused by globalization, the media and advances in transport and communication. It asserts that the preservation of culture is necessary to ensure the creativity that comes from rich cultural diversity, which in turn contributes to the economic and social development of cultures and the enrichment of humanity.

Another significant international document relevant to education for intercultural understanding is UNESCO's Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (1995), which called on nations to take all positive measures necessary to promote tolerance as a “necessity for peace and for the economic and social advancement of all peoples.”

Closer to home, the 2006 Joint ASEAN-SEAMEO Statement on the promotion of identity and socio-cultural identity in the region, emphasised the critical role that education plays in fostering inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-racial understanding within and between societies in the region. The statement also recommended that we build on country experiences in managing cultural and racial diversity in their multi-ethnic societies.

The next section shows how the values and principles expressed in many of these documents form the basis for education for intercultural understanding. Both teachers and learners should therefore be familiar with these documents and also use them as a basis for research activities.

5 What is Education for Intercultural Understanding?

Having established the rationale for why it is important to teach intercultural understanding and having placed it within the context of education for sustainable development, this section will describe and summarise education for intercultural understanding and outline its core content and learning processes, as a guide for teachers and teacher educators.

At first glance, it would seem obvious that intercultural understanding involves awareness, knowledge and understanding of many aspects of other cultures, for the purpose of living together peacefully and harmoniously. However, changing attitudes and behaviours towards those who are different from ourselves, involves much more than raising cognitive awareness, which we know does not by itself change actions. An understanding of our own culture, a deep exploration of our personal and cultural values, and the experiential development of respect and compassion for the rights of others, translated into positive action, are also required. This means that the processes of teaching and learning intercultural understanding are just as important, if not more so, than its content.

UNESCO considers that quality education includes education for intercultural understanding. The UNESCO Ministerial Roundtable defined Quality Education (2003) as the knowledge, values,
Competencies and behaviours needed for a globalised world, balancing local, national and global aspirations, reflecting cultural and linguistic diversity for equity, equality and quality of life, and for peace, freedom, solidarity, democratic citizenship, human rights and sustainable development. This statement appropriately captures the breadth and scope of education for intercultural understanding. UNESCO’s 1996 report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, chaired by Jacques Delors, identifies four pillars of learning as the foundation of education for lifelong learning and for drawing out the full potential and latent abilities of learners as individuals and as members of society, while learning to live together for sustainable human development. The four overlapping and interconnected pillars of learning, which the report says should receive equal attention in education, are:

- Learning to Know;
- Learning to Do;
- Learning to Be; and
- Learning to Live Together.

While many refer to Learning to Live Together as the pillar that relates to Education for Intercultural Understanding, in fact all four pillars are relevant, as discussed below.

‘Learning to know’ combines the inherent pleasure of learning, research, understanding, knowing and discovering, with learning how to learn independently, requiring both breadth and depth of knowledge, and the use of ICTs. It includes developing concentration, memory, and a balance of both concrete and abstract, and inductive and deductive thought. Education for intercultural understanding involves knowledge and awareness about other cultures, comparing and contrasting diverse ways of thinking, and developing deep understanding.

‘Learning to do’ refers to the creative and innovative application of knowledge, using personal, social and occupational competencies, ICT skills, interpersonal communication and life skills, teamwork, managing and resolving conflict, taking initiative and risk as entrepreneurs and agents of change, the ability to adapt to a wide-range of vocations and to be of service to others. This pillar also lends itself to developing skills for putting values into action, through positive behaviours and relationships, living harmoniously and collaborating with others of diverse cultures.

‘Learning to be’ relates to “the all-round development of the individual – mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic sense, personal responsibility and spiritual values…independent, critical thinking … (able to) form their own judgement” (Delors, 1996, p. 94). This pillar involves an internal, personal development process, central to which are values, occurring in stages as the child matures throughout life, starting from self-knowledge at the individual level, progressing to understanding others through interactions at the collective level, as member of a family, community, national citizen, worker and eventually as a global citizen. ‘Learning to be’ involves the process of “becoming” a culturally aware person, and developing positive values and attitudes, including the courage and commitment to live by those values, treating others with respect, even if this means going against the norm. Knowing oneself is seen as an essential foundation for understanding others, thereby linking with the ‘Learning to live together’ pillar. However, some consider that we come to know ourselves through a better understanding of others, calling for a reciprocal interaction between these two pillars.

‘Learning to live together’, which provides an underpinning structure for all the pillars, is seen as one of the major issues in education today. It can enable peaceful cooperation with others in all areas of
human endeavour, through knowledge, understanding and appreciation of others’ culture and values, mutual respect, equity and peaceful resolution of conflict, towards harmonious interdependence.

Since the Delors Report was published, environmental sustainability has become increasingly important, as has the need for peace, justice, equity and human rights. The changing global context necessitates an expansion of the meaning of ‘Learning to live together’ to include learning to share the world’s resources and societal wealth in peaceful, equitable, humane and sustainable ways. The ‘Learning to live together’ pillar is differentiated from the other three, which may be equated approximately to Pestalozzi’s ‘head, heart, hand’ framework. The ‘head’ refers to intellectual and cognitive processes of knowing; the ‘heart’, for the affective processes of being, feeling and valuing; and the ‘hand’, relates to manual, functional or skills development for doing, creating, implementing or taking action.

‘Learning to live together’ arguably involves all three learning processes of ‘head, heart and hand’, thereby providing both a framework and a renewed sense of purpose for education, directed to the knowledge, values and skills needed to live together peacefully, humane, equitably and sustainably, applied by citizens and a workforce that contribute to collective socio-economic well-being. It involves developing understanding, consideration and respect for others, their beliefs, values and cultures, in order to avoid conflicts, resolve them peacefully, and to co-exist peacefully. It also entails managing difference and diversity positively, as an opportunity and a valuable resource to be used for the common good, rather than as a threat.

The broad definition of Education for Intercultural Understanding means that it necessarily overlaps with many other areas of education, including human rights and citizenship education, education for peace and non-discrimination. While there is a place for specifically learning about each of these separately, teachers must also recognize their interconnectedness.

5.1 Underpinning Principles of Education for Intercultural Understanding
Six groups of principles emerge from the international documents and reports mentioned in section 4 above, to form the basis for education for intercultural understanding as follows:

- **Identity, language and cultural heritage**
  This principle upholds the rights and freedoms of all to retain, express and enjoy their culture, language and religion, and to retain and strengthen their cultural heritage, even if this differs from the majority culture in their country. This involves teaching and modeling the value of respect for difference as the basis for all social interaction and providing opportunities for all learners to learn, strengthen and express their culture, language, heritage and religion;

- **Social justice, equity and Human Rights**
  This principle entails promoting freedoms, rights, equalities, equal access and opportunities for all, to participate fully in economic, social, cultural, educational and political life in their country, ensuring that every person has equal opportunity regardless of their race, culture, language, religion, gender or disability. Education should therefore enable learners to participate effectively at local, national and global levels.

This principle may also be covered in topics within Human Rights Education and may also involve taking special measures to reduce disadvantage, eliminate discrimination and exclusion and correct past injustice, as well as create opportunities for all learners to reach their maximum potential. Education should also promote a human rights and human relations approach for countering racism
and discrimination by for example, fostering awareness of racism and discrimination, developing strategies for countering stereotyping and racism, and by developing skills in critical analysis to understand the structure of power which leads to injustice. It should also strive for equitable access to education and equitable learning outcomes for all learners;

- **Valuing Diversity and Creativity – Social and economic benefit for all**
  This principle entails actively promoting the value, benefits and contributions of others cultures and languages to the community so that all are valued in the country for their diversity, and the rich creativity, and social and economic benefits that diversity brings.

Education should ensure that all learners have the opportunity to benefit from recognising, appreciating and understanding the cultural diversity in their community. Learners should learn to value the linguistic and cultural assets of diverse peoples as a valuable resource from which we all benefit. Educational institutions may also promote this diverse resource to maximise the benefits for the overall development of the community (See the report: Our Creative Diversity);

- **Unity and solidarity in diversity**
  In order to avoid potential social fragmentation, education should also foster civic responsibility among all learners, encouraging them to commit to their country first and foremost, while also respecting the rights of all to their own culture, language and faith. This approach to unity in diversity ensures social harmony regardless of the many cultural differences that may exist within a country’s borders.

The freedom to enjoy one’s culture and to have equal access and opportunity must be built on a strong foundation of civic values of justice, mutual respect and equity, regardless of cultural or ethnic background. Education should strengthen civic values and commitment to one’s country, while respecting the rights of all others, based on a common civic platform, while allowing diversity through freedom. It also entails acting in solidarity with others of diverse cultures when one sees that they are being treated unfairly. This principle may also be covered in topics within civics and citizenship education.

All individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within the country’s legal and institutional framework, in which at least one language is shared and taught throughout the education system, including opportunities for the teaching of minority and mother tongue languages;

- **Fostering tolerance, peace and social harmony**
  Since the purpose of education for intercultural understanding is to promote peace and social harmony, both within countries and more broadly, learners need to develop understanding and knowledge about other cultures, and learn the values of mutual respect, tolerance, a peaceful and accepting orientation towards others, care, compassion and empathy, by experiencing themselves in the shoes of others, flexibility, as well as openness and generosity of spirit.

This may also involve for example, promoting positive interactions among learners of diverse cultures, learning conflict resolution skills, understanding and forgiveness for past wrongs, and actively participating in reconciliation, healing and forgiveness processes. This builds a society that lives and works together with others harmoniously for a shared future, in which all people are treated with respect and dignity. This principle may also be covered in topics within Peace Education.
• Cultural inclusivity and cultural appropriateness and sensitivity in education

Educational institutions and educators need to model appreciation for diverse cultures by demonstrating cultural inclusivity throughout the institution and in class by, for example:
- basing learning experiences around the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community, school or class;
- incorporating a range of diverse cultural knowledge, experiences and perspectives across the curriculum (including indigenous and gender sensitive perspectives);
- celebrating, valuing and learning about the histories and lives of diverse cultures and indigenous peoples, languages, faiths, achievements, and issues past and present, including through the stories and perspectives of those cultures;
- valuing and including in the learning, the cultural and linguistic knowledge, experiences and skills of diverse learners, either in the class or in the community, visiting cultural significant places if possible; and by
- enabling learners to recognise, acknowledge and engage in positive, diverse, cultural learning experiences wherever possible.

Educational institutions and educators also need to ensure that all education is historically accurate, unbiased, culturally appropriate and culturally and gender sensitive, and that content is not inadvertently offensive to some cultures or faiths. This may include a range of strategies such as the use in class of:
- culturally and gender sensitive language;
- relevant and effective, culturally-appropriate methods of teaching;
- learning strategies that acknowledge and accommodate the diverse learning styles of all learners;
- culturally appropriate strategies for diverse learners, especially for indigenous learners who learn in different ways; and
- using textbooks and resources that are historically accurate, gender and culturally sensitive and appropriate, and which foster positive attitudes and understanding towards others.

Some of these approaches may involve consulting with cultural experts or local indigenous communities, elders and custodians, where appropriate and possible. In some cases, it may be possible for learners to learn directly from local members of diverse cultures and indigenous communities.

While these six principles may be used to underpin the integration of intercultural understanding within teacher education and school curricula, it is most important that these principles also underpin the operation of the educational institution, reflected in policies and practices and modeled through the behaviour of institution staff. See section 8 below.

5.2 Learning Outcomes for Education for Intercultural Understanding

The above principles of education for intercultural understanding lead educators to strive for the following learning outcomes for their learners.

All learners will:
- have the opportunity to learn about and express their own language and cultural heritage and strengthen it through education;
- learn about, value and appreciate the culture of others and the contribution that these make to society;
- have the opportunity to learn the national language and their own mother tongue and/or another language where possible;
- have equal access to education, and the opportunity to reach their full potential enabling them to participate fully in society, through special support measures where needed;
- learn about and express their own rights and freedoms and respect those of others, and practice the values underpinning human rights through all their interactions;
- become responsible, productive citizens, able to contribute fully to society, while expressing their own language, culture and faith and respecting the rights of others to do the same;
- become tolerant, understanding, compassionate, and caring towards others;
- develop skills in resolving conflict when it occurs, and in mediating mutually beneficial, harmonious outcomes in culturally diverse contexts;
- live and work harmoniously with others of diverse cultures, including them in their lives and among their friendships where feasible;
- behave in ways that are culturally appropriate and sensitive with others of diverse culture or gender, being mindful of language and jokes;
- advocate for others and act in solidarity, when others of diverse culture are being treated unfairly.

The learning outcomes for teacher trainees undertaking education for intercultural understanding are the same as those above, but includes developing the knowledge, values, skills and confidence to be able to deliver the above outcomes for their learners in the classroom.

5.3 Content for Education for Intercultural Understanding
This section attempts to outline WHAT learners need to know in order to live together in a culturally diverse world. While the specific content of what learners need to know for intercultural understanding may change according to the context, the issues of the day, and the cultural demographics of the society, educators may choose from the following range of content areas that are most relevant:

- **Culture, language, heritage and cultural diversity**
  - Awareness and understanding about all aspects of diversity – cultural, social, religious, spiritual, linguistic, political, artistic, environmental - including history, heritage, cultural practices, food, dress, festivals, ways of being and seeing the world, traditional law and knowledge, achievements, famous people, cosmology and belief systems etc;
  - Awareness and understanding about issues faced by diverse Indigenous peoples, minority cultures, migrants and refugees, including the history of colonisation, exploitation, disadvantage, discrimination and power relations. This may involve loss of language and culture, land rights, poverty, impacts on health, education and unemployment, and appropriation of traditional knowledge and culture for tourism or economic gain (may also be covered under human rights issues below):
  - Learning to value diversity and to appreciate the achievements and contributions of other cultures and how they benefit society socio-culturally, economically, politically and environmentally;
  - Learning and practicing the values of mutual respect, equality, tolerance and compassion by sharing differences and commonalities, and by seeking to experience the world through the eyes of others;
  - Learning to share each other’s culture and to learn from each other, to work effectively and productively together, making use of the creative synergies of diversity;
  - Learning the national languages/s, one’s mother tongue and another language where possible;
  - Understanding similarities and differences among cultures.

- **Civics, Citizenship and Cultural Identities**
In any society, but particularly in those that are culturally diverse, there are multiple identities at personal, local, national and global levels. These include that of national citizen, the identity of the majority culture, and the identities of minority cultures. Added to these is the identity of all learners as emerging global citizens. Learners need to become aware of these multiple identities and have the opportunity to develop, strengthen and nurture them without experiencing undue internal conflict.

This could be included as part of civics and citizenship education, or elsewhere in the curriculum, to enable learners to become responsible and productive local, national and global citizens, while expressing their own family cultural identity and respecting the right of others to do the same. This may entail exploring, comparing and contrasting differences and similarities in values at local, national and global levels, identifying a common universal human core, and coming to understand that diverse values need not be incompatible.

• **Equality and Human Rights**
Learners should develop a critical understanding of the universal principles, concepts and legal instruments that govern human rights and freedoms, and how they translate in practice, with examples of where human rights have not been observed throughout the world and in history, and examples of good practice in societies.

Some of the topics that may be covered are:
- History of colonisation and its impact on diverse cultures;
- Impacts of globalisation on cultures and languages;
- Homogenising effect on cultures of information and communications technologies;
- Power relations in societies and the experiences of minorities (e.g. ethnic, indigenous, migrant etc);
- The structure of discrimination and disadvantage, leading to inequity, injustice, marginalisation, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, loss of culture, language and land rights etc.;
- Experiences of racism, discrimination, xenophobia and religious conflict;
- Understanding equality, equity, equal opportunity and equal access and how they are expressed in good practice;
- Understanding culturally appropriate and inclusive behaviour, practices and language;
- Education in Human Rights – including cultural and linguistic rights and socio-economic justice (including for indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees etc)

• **Peace and harmony among diverse cultures**
Education should expose learners to an accurate representation of history about war, inter-cultural and inter-religious conflict and examples of peace and harmony throughout the world. This may overlap with peace education and human rights education programs.

In addition, education should attempt to include the following:
- Expressing solidarity with others who are experiencing inequitable treatment;
- Strategies for countering racism, discrimination and xenophobia (Human Rights issues);
- Exploring examples of peace and social harmony among diverse cultures, currently and in history, and the essential features that create these;
- Developing personal inner and outer peace;
- Participating in reconciliation activities;
- Learning and practicing the processes of forgiveness and healing in conflict relationships;
- Learning and practicing conflict resolution, mediation and harmony building skills.
As may be seen, some of the content areas overlap with other areas of the curriculum such as, civics and citizenship education, peace and human rights education. For this reason, education for intercultural understanding should not be seen as a separate subject but rather a cross-curriculum perspective that is not only integrated across the curriculum, but also across the practices and behaviours that are modeled across the whole school or educational institution.

5.4 Values for Education for Intercultural Understanding
This section attempts to outline the values that learners need for understanding HOW to live together in a culturally diverse world. These values are reflected in many of the international documents discussed in section 4 above and are listed below in groups of values that are closely connected:

- Mutual Respect, Tolerance, Acceptance and Understanding
- Peace and Harmony
- Appreciating and Valuing Diversity
- Respect for human dignity and the individual worth of all people
- Compassion, Empathy, Care and Concern for others
- Equality, Equity, Justice, Fairness, Inclusion, Sharing
- Solidarity, Cooperation, Collaboration, Commitment to collective well-being
- Protection and strengthening the cultural identity, language and heritage of minorities
- Responsible Local, National and Global Citizenship, Unity, Interconnectedness
- Reconciliation, Forgiveness, Peace, Harmony, Non-Violence, Dialogue
- Mutual Trust, Truth, Courage, Commitment, Love

Educators may substitute the values for other words that are best suited to the socio-cultural context and the age group. The process for integrating values in learning is discussed in section 6 below.

5.5 Skills for Education for Intercultural Understanding
This section attempts to outline the skills that learners need, and what they need to be able to DO to live and work together harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world. It is not enough to know what leads to intercultural harmony, and what are the values leading to intercultural understanding, learners need the skills to put into practice consistently in their everyday lives, the required knowledge and values. The learning is an ongoing process of becoming a responsible citizen of the world which continues throughout life, until learners become role models for others of what it means to live harmoniously with others.

- **Culture, language, heritage and cultural diversity**
  Learners need to be able to:
  - have a strong sense of their own cultural heritage and identity, express their culture and share it with others;
  - compare and contrast differences and similarities among cultures and identify strengths and positive features among them;
  - be accepting of other cultures, faiths and languages, and their right to express these freely;

- **Equality and Human Rights**
  Learners need to be able to:
  - treat others equitably, with respect and dignity;
  - observe human rights, as reflected in their values, actions and behaviours in all contexts;
  - avoid and counter bias, prejudice and discrimination;
  - think critically, question injustice and be able to engage in logical debate;
  - stand in solidarity with others against injustice.
- **Civics, Citizenship and Cultural Identities**
  Learners need to be able to:
  - explore, negotiate and express multiple identities (i.e. local, national, global);
  - exercise responsible citizenship;
  - accept the cultural identities of others and their right to express it.

- **Peace and harmony among diverse cultures**
  Learners need to be able to:
  - live, study and work harmoniously in culturally diverse contexts, in creative synergy with others, expressing and blending their diverse strengths;
  - engage in active listening, communicate effectively and handle their emotions positively;
  - mediate, negotiate and resolve conflict, reconcile differences, and express sorrow and forgiveness;
  - co-operate effectively with others and find creative win-win solutions to social problems.

6 **Pedagogical approaches to Education for Intercultural Understanding**

For intercultural understanding, the teaching methodology should include, not only the acquisition of knowledge and deeper understandings of cultures, but also an exploration of personal values and attitudes, and the values of others, combined with skill development and participative exercises in practicing the necessary values and skills. This equates with Pestalozzi’s ‘head, heart, hand’ framework, discussed briefly in section 5. The ‘head’ refers to cognitive processes of knowing and understanding; the ‘heart’, for the affective processes of feeling empathy and valuing or appreciating other cultures; and the ‘hand’, relates to skills development for living the values, resolving conflict and taking positive action. This approach should be reflected in the pedagogy, which is best captured in the teaching-learning cycle developed by Dr. L. R Quisumbing, found in Figure 2 below, which advocates that learning activities should include a mix of knowing, understanding, valuing and action.

![Teaching-Learning Cycle](image-url)
Depending on the local cultural context, the teacher may select from one or more of the following ways in which a variety of socio-cultural learning and experiences may take place, as follows:

- **intra-cultural learning** about one culture in depth, focusing on such aspects as language, family, religion, laws, heritage, history, technology etc.;
- **intercultural learning** about other culture(s) where usually only a few components are studied across cultures (e.g. international day celebrations involving food, music, dance);
- **cross cultural learning**, which involves investigating, comparing and contrasting one component or issue across a range of cultures (e.g. art);
- **multicultural learning**, which involves affirming the multiple and diverse cultural identities associated with living in a culturally plural context as local and global citizens, including the recognition and acceptance of the cultural identity and heritage of minorities. This also involves ensuring equal access, equity, inclusion, affirmative action and culturally sensitive and appropriate teaching processes;
- **trans-cultural learning**, which involves exploring the common values and shared elements across cultures, which transcend difference, uniting us as one human family.

Where possible, these approaches should incorporate the knowledge, skills, understandings, views and needs of learners from diverse cultural backgrounds within the school, or of members of local and nearby communities. In this way, the cultural and linguistic diversity of local communities may be valued and acknowledged. By drawing on the diverse cultural knowledge, skills and experience of the learners in class, one ensures full cultural inclusion, fosters pride among learners in their own cultural heritage, and shows learners that others also value their culture.

The teacher should develop a general climate of respect for all differences in class, including gender, disability and for different learning styles and abilities. In the values-based classroom the teacher becomes a role model of respectfulness in practice, by for example, being culturally inclusive, drawing on the cultural knowledge, skills, values and experience of the learners in the class, and constantly reinforcing the strengths and positive aspects of each culture. The basic intention should be to increase the learner’s awareness of the positive aspects of their own culture and that of others around them, leading to self-respect, mutual respect and understanding. In developing an attitude of respect towards other cultures, learners should be encouraged to develop their own definitions of values such as respect, and identify ways in which they may be respectful towards others in the classroom, at school and in the community. Ideally the value of respect would be modeled throughout the whole school.

Teachers should also discourage the formation and expression of all prejudices, stereotypes and value judgements about others in the classroom on the basis of, for example, race, skin colour, physical appearance, gender, socio-economic class, ethnic origin, religion, language and other cultural or behavioral expressions. Such prejudices may lead to oppression and bullying of some learners. To do this, teachers may need to first re-examine themselves and become more keenly aware of their own prejudices and stereotypes, and then encourage learners to do the same.

An important starting point is to strengthen the cultural identity of all learners in the classroom, which then provides a solid foundation for accepting the cultures of others. There are many methods...
that are used for strengthening cultural identity, ranging from exploration of personal, family and cultural values and practices, to conducting creative activities, events and festivals, which celebrate all aspects of culture, including music, dance, food, art, literature, poetry and the making of artefacts. However, culture has deeper impacts on the lives of learners than what may be seen and experienced during a cultural festival. As learners mature, teachers must be prepared to explore ever more deeply into the unspoken assumptions, values and beliefs which underpin a culture and which influence the inner development of the emerging adult.

The processes of teaching and learning for intercultural understanding should emphasize the participation of all learners in the activities, whether observational, oral or written. The learning activities should include opportunities for researching information, extending awareness and knowledge, deepening understanding, exploring values and making comparisons and contrasts of differences and similarities between cultures in positive ways, without stereotyping or making judgments, and practicing what has been learned through school-based or community projects.

Both teachers and learners may use the internet and library resources to discover information about other cultures, and to look up the meaning of words such as ‘culture’, ‘cultural identity’ and ‘globalisation’. The teacher may draw attention to interesting themes or sources of information for learners who may wish to research further. Alternatively, the learners may conduct the research themselves.

There may also be opportunities for using visual media and undertaking creative or artistic activities. Public presentations of completed artwork and performances of cultural dramatizations may be used to positively influence the attitudes of the broader community, and are also useful for assessment purposes. Learners could maintain a reflective journal to record thoughts, insights, and reflections on their learning, which is also a useful form of assessment. Providing as many opportunities as possible for learning about each other’s cultures will pave the way for mutual cultural understanding and respect. Finally, learners should be encouraged to make a commitment to action, based on what they have learned.

Having explored the culture(s) of the learners in a classroom or community, the teacher may then extend the learning to other cultures in the country, region, or further afield. Learners may respond to intercultural exposure in various ways. Some may seek to embrace the foreign and external cultures to which they are exposed, with the undesirable effect of rejecting or perhaps feeling shame for their traditional heritage. Sometimes youth may reject their own culture and consider other cultures to be better, due to their exposure to idealised images of foreign cultures that dominate the media or internet, where their own culture and language may not be represented. For this reason, it is important for learners to develop an understanding and respect for their own culture, as well as that of others.

Others may react to external influences by turning more strongly to their own culture while rejecting that of others. Yet others may feel quite confused about the conflicting values they witness, in particular the difference between the lifestyle they live and the lifestyles they see on the screen. These are all good reasons for ensuring intercultural understanding through education, thereby strengthening one’s own culture and identity, while fostering understanding for the culture of others. Some learners may belong to two cultures because their parents are from different cultural or religious backgrounds. The richness of the bicultural and bilingual heritage of these learners should be affirmed and celebrated as a strength from which the learner and others will always benefit. Other learners may be unaware of their cultural heritage, or may have experienced racism and
discrimination as a result of it, causing them to hide, reject, or feel shame for their heritage. A sensitive teacher will gently work with such learners, maybe on a one-to-one basis, until they are more accepting of and confident of their own cultural identity.

There may be sub-cultural groups represented within the classroom. For example, religious affiliation may be the basis for significant cultural difference. Other factors such as parental employment and income, place of residence and family interests (e.g. sports, music), and even gender may contribute to sub-cultural differences. The teacher is faced with the challenge of enabling learners to understand and respect their sub-cultural differences as well as valuing their common regional or national cultural identity.

When learners explore their own culture, understand and appreciate its strengths, benefits and contributions, are proud of it and willing to share it confidently with others, they are able to sustain it in the face of exposure to other cultures. In addition, learners need to explore other cultures and identify their strengths and contributions to the world, develop an understanding and appreciation of them, learn from them and develop the ability to listen openly and respectfully when others share their culture. By observing the differences and similarities among cultures and their values, learners deepen understanding of both their own culture and that of others.

Learner development theory shows that learning and internalising the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills needed for intercultural understanding benefits from an integrated curriculum that continues and deepens throughout the years of schooling. A cyclic curriculum enables the skills and values to be revisited in greater depth each year, with practice in their application to different age-appropriate life themes, including resolving conflicts in the home, community and then further afield, as learners mature.

In order to integrate intercultural understanding across the curriculum, one may address it through each separate subject, as demonstrated in the examples in section 7 below, or the school may allocate a time for “integrative studies” to bring the learning together around specific themes. This is described further in section 7.

7 Integrating Intercultural Understanding across School Curricula

This section provides examples of ways in which intercultural understanding may be integrated within subjects in the school curriculum. Please note that subjects have different names across countries so readers will need to adapt the examples to their own context.

Intercultural understanding in the Arts (i.e. dance, theatre/drama, media, music, visual arts)

Learners will:
• understand that the arts shape and represent cultures and identities;
• explore roles, purpose and meanings of diverse cultural art forms through time and the importance of arts to cultural identity;
• develop and adapt performances and art works that represent the perspectives of diverse and marginalised cultural groups;
• use or adapt art forms from other cultures (e.g. indigenous dot paintings), understand their meaning, sacred significance and history (e.g. rock art and cave paintings) and what they reveal about cultures;
• explore the diverse medium, elements, approaches and technologies used in arts across cultures that reflect the time, place and cultural setting;
• trace the influence of the cultural works of other peoples to inform one’s own arts practice;
• explore how the arts connect people throughout the world.

**Intercultural understanding in the Sciences** (earth & space science, physics, biology, chemistry)

Learners will:
• appreciate the contributions of diverse cultures to the sciences through history;
• become aware of traditional indigenous knowledge (e.g. nature, flora, fauna, survival, herbs for medicines etc);
• become aware of culturally diverse ways of constructing knowledge;
• find out that science builds on cultural traditions of observation and inquiry;
• become aware of diverse cosmologies across cultures and faiths and the sensitivity of some debates (e.g. creationism and evolution);
• view phenomena through diverse cultural lenses to broaden and deepen understandings in ways that are not possible from only one cultural perspective;
• learn that the observations, data and interpretations of scientists are influenced by cultural experience, understandings, values, economics, power and relationships.

**Intercultural understanding in Social Studies**
(may include History, Geography, Human Rights, Civics and Citizenship, Environmental Education)

Learners will:
• explore diverse perspectives in time, place, cultures and societies;
• explore values and ethical issues from diverse cultural perspectives;
• learn how peoples are shaped by social, cultural, religious, historical, economic, political, technological and ecological systems and structures, which develop in different ways, places and times;
• acquire knowledge of diverse societies locally, nationally and globally, and become aware of changing environments and systems over time;
• come to understand the nature, causes and consequences of interdependence between societies and their environments;
• become aware of power relationships, inequality, and unequal wealth distribution in societies;
• learn about cultural diversity and social cohesion in societies and countries throughout the world;
• learn how diverse cultural perspectives develop and change over time.

**Intercultural understanding in Maths**

Learners will:
• acquire a socially constructed body of knowledge with roots in many different cultures using universal symbols;
• understand that there are many culturally diverse forms of mathematical knowledge;
• learn about the contributions to maths of various cultures throughout history;
• become aware of the diverse role of maths across cultures;
• understand the culturally diverse relationships to number;
• explore the history of diverse cultural forms of measurement;
• become aware that diverse cultural spatial abilities are shaped by one’s environment.

**Intercultural understanding in Language/s**
Learners will:

• understand the interdependence of language, culture, identity and values, how cultural concepts and perspectives are reflected in language, and the cultural principles and practices that influence communication;
• learn about the history and culture of the people whose language is being studied;
• learn about the culture when engaging in language practice;
• analyse cultural texts, poetry, literature, stories, film and theatre;
• make connections between language use and cultural values.

However, for a truly integrated and trans-disciplinary approach to education for intercultural understanding and sustainable development, teachers need to do more than address relevant topics separately through subjects as demonstrated above. Schools need to allocate time in the curriculum for learners to bring together the various themes associated with education for intercultural understanding and sustainable development, and to foster critical, integrated thinking and creative problem-solving in learners. Sessions for “integrative studies” would need to engage the interest and passion of learners, to seek practical solutions to real, or hypothetical, and locally relevant problems, using creative and innovative methods.

Such scenario and issues-based, or problem-based learning, may be undertaken through debates, discussion panels, role-plays, theatrical productions or artistic representations which explore various solutions to complex inter-related problems associated with intercultural understanding as an integral part of sustainable development. These activities require holistic, systems-thinking, to draw in the social, cultural, environmental, political and economic considerations of the issue, and the causes and consequences of various decisions and courses of action. An example of this is provided in section 9.3 below.

8 Creating a positive learning environment conducive to intercultural understanding

However, it is also not enough for educators to integrate education for intercultural understanding in classroom activities and across the curriculum, if the learning environment and the school as a whole do not also reinforce the values of mutual respect, tolerance, non-discrimination and acceptance of diversity.

8.1 Principles of a positive learning environment conducive to intercultural understanding

For education for intercultural understanding to be effective, school staff must create a learning environment that is conducive to it in the classroom and throughout the whole school so that:

• the values of intercultural understanding and human rights are reflected across the school;
• the learning environment is safe, supportive, respectful, enjoyable, equitable and inclusive;
• the learning environment is active, participative, democratic, and learner–centred, enabling the learner’s voice to be heard, alongside culturally diverse perspectives;
• the teacher is a facilitator, guide and role model, who demonstrates the values of intercultural understanding in behaviour and consistent action;
• learning encourages curiosity, creative and caring thinking, critical reflection, questioning, discussion, dialogue and collaborative action;
• learners develop positive communication and negotiation skills while working collaboratively with others;
• all learners experience a sense of belonging and feel valued and included in the group;
• intercultural understanding is integrated across the curriculum;
• the teacher uses teachable moments as valuable opportunities to make learning memorable;
learning fosters the full development and potential of the whole child, who uses all their senses in the learning;
• the teacher provides a wide range of culturally appropriate learning experiences adapted to diverse learning styles and preferences;
• the teacher involves the learner’s knowledge and experience, and builds on their interests and cultural or religious background.

As may be seen, the role of the teacher is vital to the effectiveness of education for intercultural understanding, as it is the teacher who models the desired values and behaviours, and who fosters behavioural change among the learners. Learner motivation and engagement is enhanced by the empathy, understanding and respect that teachers show towards all learners. Teachers are central figures who care, understand, guide and motivate learners and take a learner-focussed approach that values the cultural and linguistic background and experiences of learners, within a supportive teaching and learning environment that models democracy in action, and addresses issues that are relevant to the learners. To fulfill this role, teachers need to be self-aware, and to monitor and observe themselves continuously, to ensure their own continued growth and personal development.

8.2 **A Whole School approach to education for intercultural understanding**

Also important for effective intercultural understanding is the need to take a whole school approach which integrates the values for intercultural understanding throughout the school environment, in the:

• integrated curriculum content;
• holistic teaching practices;
• supportive, culturally sensitive learning context;
• organisational policies, guidelines, rules and decision making processes;
• respectful relationships across the school community;
• school-community partnerships that foster harmonious community relations, taking responsible civic action together;
• interface with the surrounding local culture, and engagement with the culturally diverse life of the school community;
• involvement of parents and communities in the children’s learning; and in
• the underlying school ethos.

Many of the above points are also applicable within Teacher Education Institutions (TEI), where the capacity of teacher trainees is being enhanced to enable them to become confident and competent teachers of intercultural understanding and sustainable development. The TEI must become a role model of human rights, intercultural understanding and sustainability in practice, with implications for the development of teacher educators themselves.

9 **Implications for Incorporating Intercultural Understanding in Teacher Education**

Clearly there are many implications for teachers and for teacher educators, of the many issues raised above. This section will summarise the key implications to be addressed within TEIs.

For effective education in intercultural understanding, the implications for teacher trainees are that they need to develop the following knowledge, values and skills:

• deep knowledge, awareness and understanding of the key issues related to intercultural understanding, and the human rights principles underpinning intercultural understanding, as outlined previously in section 5.3;
• a strong sense of their own cultural heritage and identity, as a solid foundation for acceptance of others;
• the ability to think holistically to be able to link intercultural understanding to the multiple dimensions of sustainable development (i.e. economic, social, cultural, environmental);
• critical thinking skills to question injustice, debate issues logically and sensitively, and advocate for the marginalised, and the ability to engage learners in such discussions and actions of solidarity;
• the ability to identify, clarify, develop and live the values for intercultural understanding as listed in section 5.4;
• the ability to guide and facilitate values development and attitudinal change in oneself and in learners;
• the ability to model values for intercultural understanding in all one’s relationships and in teaching practice;
• competence in the full range of skills needed for intercultural understanding, as listed previously in section 5.5;
• skills in teaching and learning methodologies which integrate the content, skills and values for intercultural understanding into and across school curricula;
• the ability to engender a positive, sensitive and inclusive learning environment that is human-rights-based, gender sensitive and conducive to promoting intercultural understanding;
• awareness of available resources for education for intercultural understanding and the ability to develop one’s own teaching resources;
• the ability to develop and implement whole school approaches to intercultural understanding;
• the ability to liaise with parents and community members, and to tap into culturally diverse community resources;
• the ability to engage in reflective practice and action research in collaboration with other teachers, to continually improve approaches to education for intercultural understanding and sustainability.

The implications for teacher educators to integrate education for intercultural understanding into teacher education curricula, include all of those listed in 9.1 above for teachers. In addition, teacher educators and administrators need to ensure that the principles and values of intercultural understanding underpin all the operations of the teacher education institution, as described above in section 8.2.

10 Activities for teacher educators to address intercultural understanding in teacher education

The first step towards integrating education for intercultural understanding into teacher education institutions are for teacher educators to:

• reaffirm their own cultural heritage and identity, as a solid foundation for deep understanding and acceptance of that of others;
• deepen and broaden their own awareness of the socio-cultural, religious and linguistic demography of their country, region and globally, including the contemporary and historical key issues facing cultural minorities locally and more broadly;
• become aware of the key international and human rights instruments relevant to intercultural understanding and understand how the principles apply to local contexts;
• engage with peers in critical dialogue around contemporary socio-cultural issues, to develop deep and unbiased understanding of the many perspectives associated with them, and be willing to advocate and act for the marginalised and oppressed;
• develop a practical understanding of conflict resolution and mediation strategies, to be able to train teachers in developing these skills among school learners, or alternatively, be able to access resource persons with these and other necessary skills;
• become aware of one's own values, attitudes and prejudices towards other peoples, and be willing to challenge oneself to change these, to develop personal values in keeping with those listed in section 5.4, and to become role models who live these values in their lives;
• adapt, enhance and broaden their existing knowledge around pedagogical approaches suited to education for intercultural understanding, and diverse ways of developing conducive learning environments across a whole school;
• become familiar with the available resources relevant to education for intercultural understanding, and a range of good practice case studies gleaned from other teacher education institutions;
• become familiar with action-learning research methodologies and be able to engage with peers in reflective practice, and a continuous learning and improvement approach to integrating intercultural understanding in teacher education for sustainability.

Having established the core personal knowledge, values and skills necessary for integrating intercultural understanding in teacher education for sustainability, teacher educators and administrators may decide to form small teams to engage in a range of implementation projects on key topics, depending on their role in the organisation. While these topics would vary from one context to another, focus groups or action teams may wish to, for example, address projects on:

i. **Ethos, Policy and Governance**
   To ensure that (for example):
   - institutional policies, guidelines and practices reflect and model the principles and values of intercultural understanding;
   - there are fair and equitable complaints policies for teacher trainees who may experience discrimination, bullying or harassment;
   - diverse cultures are adequately represented among governing and consultative bodies;
   - all staff receive professional development in the values and practices, so these are translated into behaviours across the teacher education institution (TEI);

ii. **Learning environment**
   To ensure that (for example):
   - the learning environment in the TEI is positive, sensitive and conducive to intercultural understanding;
   - teacher trainees of diverse cultures feel comfortable in that environment;
   - all teacher trainees experience the type of learning environment that they will need to create with their school learners for effective education for intercultural understanding.

iii. **Curriculum integration**
    To ensure that (for example):
    - opportunities for acquiring the content, values and skills associated with education for intercultural understanding, are integrated across TEI curricula where appropriate, in existing course subjects to begin with, leading to eventual total course restructure to encompass all sustainable development perspectives.
    - time is allocated in the TEI curriculum for integrating learning across the various dimensions of sustainability (i.e. economic, social, cultural, environmental) based on relevant, real or hypothetical scenarios.

iv. **Learning and Pedagogy**
    To ensure that (for example):
curso of units or subjects in the TEI that address the teaching of learning and pedagogy with teacher trainees, incorporate the pedagogical principles and practices applicable to education for intercultural understanding;
- teacher trainees have the opportunity to undertake teaching practice in education for intercultural understanding, preferably within a culturally diverse context if possible.

v. Resources – People and materials

To ensure that (for example):
- existing teaching, learning and library resources and textbooks, are culturally sensitive and do not convey discriminatory or racist attitudes;
- appropriate teaching and learning resources are available for both teacher educators and for teacher trainees, relevant to education for intercultural understanding;
- working relationships and partnerships are formed with appropriate external resource persons and agencies, who may bring relevant expert knowledge and experience to the teaching program, including cultural teachers who are members of cultural minorities and are willing to share their experiences.

There may be other projects that TEI staff may decide to initiate, according to the local context, however, it is vital that the first two tasks be:

- the development of personal knowledge, values, skills and attitudinal change (if necessary) within teacher educators themselves; and
- the development of a whole (TEI) institution approach to integrating and modelling the principles of education for intercultural understanding, reflected in institutional policy, guidelines, practices, and in staff relationships with each other, with teacher trainees and with the broader community of cultural resources and expertise.

From there may emerge the integration across the curriculum of education for intercultural understanding, and the adoption of appropriate teaching and learning approaches.

At Attachment 1 may be found a Matrix to guide teacher education institutions in developing their institutional approach to education for intercultural understanding.

11 Integrating Intercultural Understanding within the Social Studies subject

In different countries, Social Studies may include many subjects and topics within it, such as History, Geography, Human Rights, Civics and Citizenship and Environmental Education to name a few. How each country approaches the integration of intercultural understanding will therefore vary according to the context. This section will provide examples of some ways in which integration within the subject may occur.

11.1 Learning Objectives

In section 7 above, a sample of learning objectives for Social Studies was provided, which anticipated that learners would:

- explore diverse perspectives in time, place, cultures and societies;
- learn how diverse cultural perspectives develop and change over time.
- explore values and ethical issues from diverse cultural perspectives;
- learn how peoples are shaped by social, cultural, religious, historical, economic, political, technological and ecological systems and structures, which develop in different ways, places and times;
- develop an awareness of the relationship between cultures and the natural world (especially indigenous)
• develop an understanding of the links between the loss of biodiversity and the loss of cultural and linguistic diversity;
• experience compassion, understanding and respect for difference in a wide range of local, national and global contexts;
• learn to value and appreciate others and to celebrate diversity for its own sake and also for the benefits it brings to all;
• learn to think critically about bias, discrimination and stereotyped images;
• acquire knowledge of diverse societies locally, nationally and globally, and become aware of changing environments and systems over time;
• learn about cultural diversity and social cohesion in societies and countries throughout the world;

Other learning objectives may be added according to the topics that are covered within Social Studies in each context.

For example, for civics and citizenship topics, learning objectives may be:
• to raise awareness and understanding of the community, nation and broader world in which learners live and their place in it;
• to become aware of personal, cultural, national and global values, to appreciate the similarities and reconcile the differences;
• to develop a strong sense of personal and cultural identity, alongside one’s identity as both a national and a global citizen;
• to explore one’s responsibility as a member of one’s family, cultural community and local society, alongside responsibility as a national and global citizen.

For topics which address human rights issues, learning objectives may be:
• to become aware of human rights and freedoms, and cultural and linguistic rights;
• to become aware of power relationships, bullying, harassment, discrimination and other examples of structural violence in societies;
• to become aware of inequalities and injustice locally, nationally and globally;
• to develop compassion and a sense of social justice.

For topics which address environmental sustainability issues, learning objectives may be:
• to come to understand the nature, causes and consequences of interdependence between societies and their environments;
• to appreciate the importance of connection to the earth for indigenous peoples;
• to learn from traditional peoples, the value of the earth and respect for its resources and all living things, to be cared for and treasured for future generations;
• to compare and contrast the different ways in which diverse cultures lived off the land through time.

11.2 Individual Learning Activities

This section lists some sample learning activities, which individually address some of the learning outcomes listed above for the Social Studies subject. The details of each sample learning activity are described in Attachment 2 - Intercultural Understanding Learning Activities. However, the examples are not exhaustive and should be adapted and enhanced to suit the local context.

Intercultural Understanding Learning Activities for Social Studies:
1. The Culture Iceberg – What aspects of culture are visible and invisible?
2. Protection and Promotion of Diversity
3. Similarities and Differences through the Media
4. National Symbols around the World
5. Perceptions of Difference: Prejudice and Discrimination
6. Tolerance
7. Respect for difference
8. Equity and Justice
9. Challenging Stereotypes

The learning activities have been drawn from various sources and are acknowledged at the end of each activity. Teacher educators should always model the acknowledgement of sources to their trainees.

11.3 Integrated Learning Activities
Each of the topics mentioned above, and others, may be addressed separately for in-depth knowledge and understanding of the respective issues. However, time also needs to be allocated to an integrated understanding of how these topics are inter-related. For example, good national and global citizenship should be linked to environmental and social responsibility, and observance of human rights, and then applied in practice to real or relevant hypothetical situations that may be familiar to the learner.

Scenarios may be developed, or drawn from local and national newspapers, magazines, television programs or from the internet. An example may be as follows:

A multinational company has found a rich source of profitable minerals in a natural forest inhabited for many centuries by a self-sufficient, indigenous community, with their own language and traditional lifestyle, which depends heavily on the forest for food, products and natural medicines. The government welcomes the company’s proposed mining project, as it will bring employment and prosperity to the nearby urban community, which has been economically depressed for decades. The urban townsfolk also look forward to the opportunity of being gainfully employed and of providing their children with a good education. The worker’s union supports the rights of workers to make a living through mining. However, local environment and human rights activists are very vocal about the destruction of the environment and the indigenous culture that is intimately connected to it, pollution of local water supplies and the loss of rare species of wildlife that depend on the forest.

Such a scenario, or variations on a range of similar themes, can provide months of research topics for learners on related topics, and many opportunities for debate, discussion, problem-solving, explorations around values and human rights, dramatizations and role plays of the various parties, and practice in conflict resolution and mediation strategies.

A useful tool for developing thinking and questioning around the various dimensions of sustainability around intercultural understanding (i.e. socio-cultural, political, economic, natural/environmental) is the Development Compass Rose (See Attachment 3 - Source: The Development Compass Rose, Development Education Centre, Birmingham, 1995)

12 Resources


International Instruments:


URL_ID=33232&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html


UNHCHR (1962) UN Convention against Discrimination in Education. URL: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/education.htm


International Reports:

