

# CONTRIBUTION TO THE PREPARATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S 'WHITE PAPER ON INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE'



Brussels, April 2007

CEJI – *A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe*, stands with individuals and organisations of all religions, cultures and backgrounds to promote a diverse and inclusive Europe. CEJI works to combat prejudice and discrimination and to promote social cohesion through training, education, dialogue and advocacy.

A leading provider of diversity education and training in Europe, CEJI educates young people, adults and public organisations through ever-growing networks. Based in its commitment to enhancing inter-cultural and inter-faith understanding, CEJI is also at the forefront of a new Jewish-Muslim dialogue initiative that brings together dialogue practitioners from various countries to exchange experiences and to showcase the successes of Jewish-Muslim dialogue on the European level.

Based on our expertise in intercultural education and dialogue work, we are glad to make a contribution to the creation of a White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. We are glad to see that the Council of Europe has taken on the task of actively promoting dialogue between Europeans, as this can only lead to an improved mutual understanding and a more inclusive society.

## **CEJI's policy vision on cultural diversity in democratic societies:**

1. Through its various programmes, CEJI aims to create a more inclusive Europe, to help shape a continent on which citizens are proactive, engaged and open to the 'other'. In our work, we have seen that much prejudice comes from misunderstandings or a lack of knowledge. Teaching people about their own multiple identities, as well as about understanding the identities of others, can bridge gaps and enable people to see beyond their own perceived interests to the common societal good.

In CEJI's vision, the various cultures that make up Europe today – whether based on religion, culture, nationality, heritage or other factors – bring to the continent a richness that needs to be cherished. The 'European identity', an elusive concept in and of itself, has historically not been monolithic, and recognising this enhances the respect people have for each other. Dialogue is crucial in fostering this respect.

2. While the European context – a growing European Union, encompassing more Member States of the Council of Europe with every enlargement – is a primary reason to address diversity, the context in today's global village is no less important. Increased mobility of persons, as well as the constant global information flow through for instance the internet and satellite television, remind us every day of cultural differences and afford an opportunity for many people to be continually aware of their place in this larger context.

This does, however, cause problems from time to time: if people are unaware of cultural distinctions, and uncomfortable with their own identities, the inter-connectedness of the world as we see it today can be perceived as a threat, rather than as a step towards a safe, free and peaceful world. To prevent this from happening, and to guarantee every person's individual rights, it is necessary to ensure that people are well-versed in their own cultural background, but more so, to provide them with a sense of pride in diversity by teaching them about the added value of this phenomenon.

Until now, teaching about inclusiveness and diversity has been the domain of individual schools, NGOs and some lone pioneering school networks. We believe, however, that the duty to educate citizens about cultural diversity lies also with the states themselves. The public good is served by the inclusion of diversity education and anti-racism education in public curricula, making diversity an issue for everyone in Europe. The Ministries of Education of the Council of Europe's Member States would greatly enhance the efficacy of diversity education by becoming proactive actors on this subject, reaching every student in Europe. Simultaneously, by including the subject in the required learning goals, diversity will no longer be the domain of smaller organisations – the leverage created by this addition would enhance the development of learning materials about the topic by making it mainstream. From what we have seen in our work, such an inclusion will also strengthen students' sense of self, as well as their European identity, a crucial step at this time indeed.

With this in mind, it is much appreciated that the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has published a "General Policy Recommendation on combating racism and racial discrimination at school" (General Policy Recommendation N° 10, published on 21 March 2007), in the preparation of which CEJI participated.

### **The concept of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue:**

3. While CEJI has not formally defined 'intercultural dialogue', the concept is crucial to its work. This is true on all levels of the organisation's functioning: in CEJI's Brussels office, there are eight staff members representing seven nationalities, various religious expressions and a variety of other identifications such as gender, sexual orientation, etc. The Council of Europe, with its 46 Member States and two candidate members, represents an even larger amalgam, wherein intercultural dialogue plays an implicit role on a daily basis. As such, intercultural dialogue permeates the activities of any organisation of any scope.

Of course, CEJI's work deals with making this diversity, and the resulting 'dialogue', explicit. The challenge today in our work is not so much in bringing together those who already have these kinds of contact, but rather to facilitate the bridging of individuals and groups that are further apart on the spectrum. This facilitation is a necessary exercise in today's Europe, as well as in the national and local spheres. Active dialogue programmes can bring those people together who do not share a world view, and lay the foundations for a more inclusive view of the society in which we all live.

The definition for intercultural dialogue as mentioned in the 'consultation document' is a useful one, though we would slightly modify it to read as follows:

*Intercultural dialogue is an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of one's own and the other's world perception. This will lead also to a more authentic and productive cooperation in building inclusive societies.*

4. This kind of dialogue can be sustained in myriad ways. CEJI's programmes focus on formal and non-formal educational structures, and on creating a European platform for dialogue initiatives where this is lacking.

CEJI works in non-formal peer-led structures with youth (ages 18-30) through its youth organisation, EPTO (European Peer Training Organisation), as well as with children in formal school settings through its A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ Programme. These networks deal with a variety of issues regarding intercultural dialogue, notably issues of religion, ethnicity and gender. Issue-specific modules are

currently under development, notably one on Gender and Homophobia. An evaluation of some of these activities is underway, but its findings are not yet available to the public.

Moreover, in October 2006 CEJI launched a new training module on Religious Diversity for adult educators, which aims to address diversity and discrimination issues related to religion using interactive and participatory methods. This module does not focus on interreligious dialogue, but rather aims to allow educators to deal with religion-related matters as they are pertinent in diverse educational settings and groups. As the module is fairly new, no reports on this project are available yet, but we can report that there is large interest in the training programmes.

Lastly, CEJI has recently launched a Jewish-Muslim Dialogue project, culminating in the European Jewish-Muslim Dialogue Conference, held from 15-17 April 2007 in Brussels. This conference brought together around 60 practitioners of Jewish-Muslim dialogue in five Council of Europe Member States, to allow them to exchange experiences and showcase their results on a European level. As a part of the preparations for this conference, CEJI and its partners prepared mapping reports of local and national Jewish-Muslim dialogue initiatives in the countries represented at the conference.

6. CEJI initiates new activities, modules and national coordination efforts in partnership with local and national partner organisations and government agencies. In order to obtain financing, institutional support and other resources, CEJI presents its activities at meetings, conferences and forums, as well as in one-to-one meetings with local potential partner organisations. These outreach efforts result in new dialogue and diversity projects, but they serve as well to promote the importance of intercultural dialogue in general.

Within the Jewish community, CEJI co-operates closely with international organisations such as the Conference of European Rabbis and the International Council of Jewish Women, providing expertise on intercommunal relations and antisemitism. CEJI also organises a biannual training seminar for Jewish community leaders, 'European Encounters', which focuses on intercultural programs and on Europe-wide initiatives. These seminars emphasise the role of international organisations such as the Council of Europe in education and community development, and empower the local organisations to become more interculturally and internationally active. This has allowed us to become a point of reference for Jewish organisations on topics of intercultural dialogue.

CEJI's presence in Brussels has also enabled the organisation to play an active role towards the European institutions on matters pertaining to intercultural dialogue and diversity in Europe. CEJI is an active member of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), and is in regular contact with educational, religious and other anti-discrimination organisations.

- 5./7. Besides the aforementioned mapping reports on local and national dialogue initiatives, the Jewish-Muslim Dialogue Conference will also lead to the publication of Guidelines on Good Practices in Jewish-Muslim Dialogue Initiatives.

CEJI will publish, in 2007, a Study on Citizenship Education for Diversity, which includes an inventory of activities across five countries in that field and a set of Operational Guidelines.

ACODDEN (A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ – Diversity Education Network), a network launched by CEJI to serve as a European platform of reference in the field of intercultural education, produced three publications on diversity education with youth:

- *The Empowerment of Pupils: A Framework for Educators* (ACODDEN Diversity Education Series, Nr 1; November 2003)

- *Vouloir et Pouvoir Apprendre; ou l'acquisition d'une vraie maîtrise de la langue de l'école* (ACODDEN Diversity Education Series, Nr 2; February 2004)
- *Les Compétences Transversales ; Un concept-clé pour l'éducation à la diversité en Europe. Quelle réalité en Communauté française de Belgique ?* (ACODDEN Diversity Education Series, Nr 2; March 2004)

The ACODDEN Network also published a book on diversity and citizenship:

- Giuseppe Ianni and Dina Sensi (eds), *Diversity and Citizenship: a challenge and an opportunity for schools* (CEJI and IRRE Toscana, June 2004)

Articles about CEJI's work and by CEJI staff have also appeared in the CoE Youth and Sport Directorate magazine 'Coyote':

- Robin Sclafani, "Anti-Racism Training: EPTO Style", in: COYOTE Magazine #5, January 2002
- Sabine Finzi, "Peer Training: Education of young people by young people or motivations for volunteering", in: COYOTE Magazine #7, July 2003
- Luis Manuel Pinto, "A symposium of many names", in: COYOTE Magazine #12, Spring 2007

#### **Promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion at international, national and local level:**

8. There are clear obstacles to the implementation of intercultural dialogue. At the start of the educational process, it is difficult to reach those individuals and groups that are most opposed to an approach in which diversity is cherished. In many cases, those groups are the same ones that experience or perpetrate forms of exclusion and discrimination, and in some cases, they suffer from poverty.

Reaching those groups is difficult due to two main factors. Firstly, these groups are often less active in mainstream civil society organisations, meaning that it is more difficult for anti-racism and citizenship organisations to work with them, or to even make initial contact to gauge the interest in non-formal programs.

Secondly, these areas of the population are oftentimes served by public schools that are struggling to fulfil their basic teaching objectives. This means that interest in citizenship and diversity programmes is slim, while the need for these programmes is often largest specifically in those situations. Intercultural programming could help in these places in order to prepare the students for the labour market and for successful living in society at large.

One other group that is difficult to reach consists of those at the far right on the political spectrum – those who oppose diversity as a matter of principle. These groups especially need to be included: while it is impossible to eradicate racist ideology altogether, it is feasible to ensure that everyone, including those on the right-wing political fringe, receives diversity education and is somewhat versed in dialogue, enabling better understanding and respect of the rights of the 'other', even when mutual love is out of the question. This question touches on the limitations of dialogue: There must be at least some will, some interest to learn about the other in order for dialogue not to revert to a monologue or to preaching about diversity. Yet, while dialogue may not immediately be possible between two people or groups that are far apart, this may be circumvented by taking dialogue step by step, allowing each person and group to develop structured contact first with those who are closer to them to begin with.

In the organisational sphere, we see another set of obstacles, in the form of a lack of political and institutional will, resources and support for intercultural learning programmes. Currently, intercultural dialogue programmes, anti-racism education and

diversity training are carried out by civil society and certain progressive and proactive schools. Under the current structure and funding regimes, on all political levels, funding is mostly available for one-off projects. Projects are mostly funded on an annual basis and as such, NGOs are hard-pressed to come up with new, snazzy proposals and ideas for each and every funding cycle.

Intercultural dialogue takes time and resources. Prejudices are hard to overcome, as they are deep-seated feelings that a simple class-taught lesson cannot overcome. Deep-rooted hatred, historical conflict and societal factors such as immigration and social exclusion all play large roles in combating discrimination and providing sustainable dialogue to improve social cohesion and an inclusive atmosphere. These issues are common in all forms of values education, whereby the participants (of all ages, in all learning formats,) are essentially asked to shed some of their long held beliefs in order to look at the 'other' and at themselves with a different mindset.

As such, intercultural dialogue programmes need to be implemented, then strengthened by follow-up activities, evaluated and adapted to the findings of the evaluation, and finally, implemented on a larger scale. For this, there is currently little institutional support.

Thus, programmes are currently run on shoestring budgets, with few resources of the kind available to the general education systems, and can often not be guaranteed sustainability beyond the first implementation phase as the money stream is continually under threat. There is little time to build proper working relationships with the organisations and schools involved, due to the constant angst that funding will not be renewed in the next funding cycle.

Practically, this means that for all intents and purposes, intercultural dialogue programmes continually remain in a de facto pilot period. Financing for thorough evaluation, which is especially necessary as values education does not produce easily measurable results, is scarce. Follow-up beyond the first steps is near impossible, and the widespread implementation of a programme in a city or country's full public school system is out of the question.

As the agencies and organisations involved in these projects are constantly scrambling to participate in the application processes of a variety of funds on all levels (from city councils to private foundations to national governments and international organisations), while trying simultaneously to fulfil these funders' various reporting requirements, the resources of the organisations involved are stretched beyond the manageable.

9. These obstacles could be overcome by the creation of more funds for long-term intercultural dialogue programmes. While this would not immediately resolve the implementational obstacles mentioned above, it would create sustainable programmes that can be executed, evaluated and then replicated on a larger scale. This would mean, in turn, that the most successful programmes could then be targeted to specific areas where they are needed, especially in those areas where it is difficult to create partnerships through the short-term grants we see today.

The political will and institutional support for intercultural dialogue need to be bolstered on all levels. On a European scale, organisations like the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe can create the framework for this through the adoption of clear and unequivocal messages on the matter. Another, more practical show of support would be the creation of a better funding structure for these activities. This would simultaneously aid the civil society organisations active in the field.

This would entail the creation of long-term grants (in the range of five or more years), which would enable civil society organisations such as CEJI to focus on implementation rather than on the constant search for funding. These grants should

include budget lines for evaluation, follow-up and implementation on a wider scale. While reporting requirements are necessary and useful to preserve the integrity of both the funder and the receiver of grants, the current mass of varying reporting requirements create a large burden on the shoulders of the receiver. Harmonised funding and reporting structures would be another step to enhancing NGOs' capacity to focus on the programming rather than on the funding needs<sup>1</sup>.

On the national level, Member States can support the creation of intercultural dialogue programmes (in the broadest sense) by mainstreaming dialogue into the national curricula. Demanding teachers to deal with inter-group issues proactively and pre-emptively can only better the level of mutual understanding, allowing for a more open atmosphere, which in turn will facilitate a better learning environment.

On the local level, governments can take the first step towards attaining a more inclusive atmosphere in their cities through similar initiatives: In schools, intercultural dialogue should be used to foster unity between the students, and to bolster their own identities. Tension that may –and does in many places— exist is thus reduced, and a better ambience is provided for the students to thrive.

Meanwhile, dialogue programmes need not stop when school is over: Through a more community-wide approach, school students, parents, youth centres, religious organisations and other actors in the local community can become involved, ensuring that what is taught in the classroom is not left behind there. Supporting students in all facets of their lives strengthens the impact of the dialogue programmes, and allows these issues to be brought to the fore with other people that influence the children, including parents, community and social workers, religious leaders, as well as public authorities, local law enforcement and employers.

This kind of programme would also ensure the participation of minorities, whether cultural, religious, ethnic or based on any other identifying factor. Through the inclusion of all actors in local society, all will have their voices heard and be able to contribute to the well-being of the locality, showing the cultural richness they can create when brought altogether. This kind of locally based project is one manner of creating joint action, the next step after dialogue: When all players in a local community are involved with each other in dialogue, ideally an atmosphere is created wherein it is possible to launch common actions coming out of local initiatives. This is necessary to cement the relationships created, but also to ensure that the dialogue project has a more practical effect and mobilises people around a unifying goal.

Thus through mainstreaming and looking seriously at the community-wide circumstances and dialogue needs, there are ways of overcoming the abovementioned obstacles, which need to be tackled on the institutional and political levels, locally, nationally as well as internationally. CEJI's programmes aim to achieve part of these goals, albeit on a smaller scale. These practices will be described in more detail in the 'Good Practices' annexes requested in question 13.

The European Peer Training Programme (EPTO) brings young people (ages 18-30) together in a peer-led, non-formal learning environment. The openness and informality allow the participants to develop themselves in safe surroundings, allowing them to explore their own identities while comparing them to those of their peers. The interactive character of the training seminars directly empowers the participants to become more involved in anti-racism activities and in civil society.

The A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ programme is geared towards teachers of secondary schools. (A primary school programme has been piloted in the Netherlands and will hopefully be implemented on a larger scale, funding permitting.) It enables the teachers to tackle issues of identity proactively and in an affirmative manner. By

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<sup>1</sup> An example of a harmonised structure is of course the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), especially their adapted system for Small and Medium Entities.

discovering the diversity within themselves, the students are opened up to diversity as a subject, and learn about others in a positive way. This breaks down tension in classrooms where it exists, and creates an atmosphere of openness, allowing for better interaction between the students, thus creating a healthier learning environment. This has been taken a step further in the School-Community Approach, whereby peer-training activities are organised by the school and the students together. Altogether, these programmes prepare the students for their future, strengthening their sense of civic responsibility.

Similarly, our Religious Diversity training programme empowers educators to actively deal with issues of religion they will encounter in their work. Steeped in the secular culture of Europe, but respectful of religious sensitivities, educators are then able to create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and understanding in the learning environment, for religious and non-religious people alike.

CEJI's European Jewish-Muslim Dialogue Conference brought together dialogue practitioners from various countries, and gave them an opportunity to exchange experiences and showcase their expertise on the European level. We found, and this is found in literature on the subject as well, that those religious people that are involved in dialogue attach great value and religious significance to this. They often see this as a part of their spiritual life that takes an important place in their interpretation of their religion.

Most of the participants in the conference were lay-leaders in their religious-cultural communities, showing that dialogue must come not only from the religious leadership, but also from the grassroots in a bottom-up approach. The conference has shown us that when supported on the ground, dialogue can be a tool to bring together people of various communities in informal settings, allowing them to explore common interests and each other's cultures by using day-to-day life experiences. Theological discussions are necessary and useful, but reach only a certain elite. CEJI's bottom-up approach reaches more people in a more personal manner, thereby creating a private bond between people who would otherwise not meet. Moreover, Orthodox Judaism, the Catholic and certain Protestant churches as well as most Muslims streams do not let women serve as religious leadership. As such, in creating dialogue between religious leaders, half the population is excluded. Through supporting grassroots initiatives rather than targeting only the religious leadership, women's participation is much more likely to be ensured. A community approach is warranted here as well.

#### **Expectations towards the Council of Europe:**

10. Local, national and international dialogue initiatives need to be backed politically as well as financially. The Council of Europe, in cooperation with other international organisations, can help create the political impetus and the practical resources in a number of ways: funding for already existing programmes should be strengthened and made more sustained to enable the civil society organisations active in the field to create better, longer-term projects. Projects incorporating dialogue and diversity training, as well as those dealing with other, related issues such as social cohesion, gender equality, civic responsibility and the combat against exclusion, need the support of international organisations.
11. The Council of Europe has a longstanding reputation in this field, and its support for this type of activity greatly enhances the credibility of the NGOs involved. Small as they are, many NGOs in this particular field rely on funding from the Council of the Europe and the European Union, as well as on national funds. Stronger support for these organisations coupled with a clear political message to the Member States that dialogue is an issue that demands immediate attention, would help raise the image of the topic in the public sphere. It would help create a situation wherein dialogue is no longer regarded as a 'soft' subject, and where the organisations that create and support dialogue are lifted out of the margins so that their expertise is used more effectively. Thus, diversity and dialogue would become better-known and be more

acceptable topics. Dialogue could become a classroom topic like citizenship and other values education, allowing more public funding to go towards the issue, enabling the creation of more resources and allowing dialogue to take its place in the upbringing of every European child.

Thus the Council of Europe would help strengthen a European cultural identity among citizens, transcending the national political level to take a bird's eye view of the needs that need to be addressed for the creation of a proactively diverse population that enjoys democratic stability. The Council of Europe's experience in finding solutions to the challenges facing European society is clear, and allows the organisation to take a proactive, pioneering role as it has in the past. Dialogue is necessary today, between peoples, cultures, religions, and many other groups. The Council of Europe is an international institution that can make this dialogue happen throughout the continent to enhance Europe's commitment to its common and democratic principles. It affects more Europeans than does the European Union, allowing it to create dialogue between groups that are currently not a part of the Union's scope but where dialogue could better relations with the population in EU-Member States, such as Turkey and some countries of the former Soviet Union.

On a more descriptive level, the Council of Europe could provide a database of intercultural dialogue activities currently taking place in its Member States. In order to prevent overlap, this database could well be integrated into the OSCE ODIHR's 'Tolerance Information System', which serves as "a collection point for information related to tolerance and non-discrimination". This could become a reference database for organisations and individuals looking to find dialogue partners, and would provide a clear overview of dialogue initiatives across Europe.

12. Still, the Council of Europe is not the only player in this field. Other international institutions, such as the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and UNESCO, have similar competences and experiences. In order to maximise the effect of their initiatives, coordination and cooperation between them is crucial. To achieve maximum impact in the area of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, these organisations need to work together closely on a number of levels: The first of these is by ensuring that where appropriate, policy recommendations and other measures adopted by the one are strengthened by the other. This of course needs to be done while preventing overlap, but an example could be the abovementioned ECRI "General Policy Recommendation on combating racism and racial discrimination at school". If this recommendation were supported, and if necessary, legally enforced, by the European Union, it would only gain in strength.

Further, the expertise currently available could be harnessed to greater advantage by organising joint conferences and expert meetings. Bringing together all of the experts into one room would create a synergy that is currently unattainable and save resources such as time and expenses.

Another level of cooperation is more practical: As mentioned above, harmonised reporting standards on grants would relieve the burden on civil society, while losing none of the necessary transparency and accountability. A further step could include joint funding for diversity and dialogue projects, decreasing the amount of time and resources spent on application processes. The Council of Europe could here, too, take the first step and show its goodwill to civil society.

#### **Examples of good practice:**

13. Examples of good practice are attached to this document. They include the A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ (13.a/b), EPTO (European Peer Training Organisation) (13.b/c), CEJI's Religious Diversity Training programme and our European Jewish-Muslim Dialogue Initiative (both 13.k).

## **A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ – School Community Approach**

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**3. Themes:** *Social cohesion, equality, fight against racism, development of participative citizenship, history/collective memory, education/training, work/employment/professional integration, fight against exclusion, interreligious dialogue, cultural diversity, raising awareness of religious practices, democracy, minorities, fight against stereotypes, integration, equality between men and women, conflict prevention, cultural co-operation.*

### **4. Target groups (beneficiaries)**

The beneficiaries are the various members of the school community who should experience a more inclusive, participatory school climate. This ultimately has a positive impact on the learning experience of the pupils, on the teaching experience of the teachers and on the management experience of the school direction. Pupils develop more positive concepts of self-identity and the roles they can play in the society as active citizens. Also, by diminishing the conscious and unconscious prejudices of teachers, there are more chances of equal success amongst the pupils, thus impacting and enhancing their chances for life.

### **5. Intervention level (international, national, local), geographic area**

This is a local intervention which is available until now in the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Italy, Germany and Austria. Implemented local coordinating organisation, CEJI administers the network of coordinators, develops new materials and reaches out to new opportunities to implement the programme in new locations. There are annual opportunities for the exchange of experiences between coordinators, and for the development of cooperative programmes.

### **6. Objectives**

The School Community Approach aims to help schools in:

- Making an institutional commitment to the creation of an inclusive environment;
- Recognising cultural diversity as an invaluable resource;
- Being prepared to confront prejudice and discrimination, and to address intercultural conflicts;
- Shaping an improved climate and better communication amongst various actors in the school community;
- Developing a sustainable action plan;
- Achieving objectives set by the school within the programme, such as: intercultural integration, violence prevention, active citizenship, better behaviour and performance of pupils, improved relations amongst staff, etc;
- Recognising and encouraging the role of youth in the school community;
- Experiencing the positive impact of active citizenship in the school climate.

### **7. Start and end date**

The European version of the A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ Programme started in Germany in 1993, and at European Union level with a Comenius grant in 1997 including Netherlands, Belgium, France and Italy. There is no end date as national activities continue to grow, as this effective diversity education programme evolves to meet social needs. Every school that works with the programme may make a one or two year commitment to

implementing the programme, and many continue longer as a support for the diversity dimension of school development plans.

#### **8. Description of activities** (participants, activities)

The School Community Approach is the coming together of two successful CEJI-programmes. It was created to answer to the expressed need for a more integrated method for diversity education to ensure that diversity is dealt with in a more cohesive way. Schools around Europe face new challenges as a microcosm and reflection of social issues, changing populations, and intercultural tensions. Today's multiculturalism offers richness and promises for the construction of Europe, and it calls institutions to be accountable to democratic values of equality and tolerance. During periods of rapid social change (including technology, labour market, globalisation, cultural norms, etc.), conflict and tensions are part of the normal process of negotiating social limits, and schools find themselves in a kind of experimental sphere for preparing citizens to succeed in diverse societies.

The A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ and Peer Training Programmes both originated with the Anti-Defamation League and were adapted to a European context by CEJI. They are two complementary approaches to enhance the awareness and skills of the school community to be able to embrace diversity, confront discrimination, and create inclusive learning environments where all pupils can succeed. A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ provides training and curricular tools for teachers to develop effective classroom strategies. Peer Training develops youth leadership and important transversal skills that empower pupils to actively participate in defining a positive school climate. These two programmes together, equal parts of an interconnected project in which the administration develops a long-term view to school development, provide a clear framework within which schools are better prepared to address the social and educational challenges of today. This is called the School Community Approach, defined as:

*A long-term view to school development that involves the various actors of the school community in order to create a positive learning environment that respects diversity and where all pupils can succeed.*

The A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ Programme is a tool for developing awareness and skills for creating inclusive learning environments. The ultimate objective is for schools to take ownership of their own diversity initiatives. The Programme, represented by the coordinator and trainers, is a facilitator of the school's process for change. It can be used in a preventative function, and it can be used to intervene in existing intercultural conflicts within the school community.

The method of the Peer Training Programme is based upon the belief that young people deliver a message to their peers that is often more credible and efficient than when it is delivered by authority figures. Peer training provides a forum for young people to speak honestly about issues that concern them, to explore solutions and new ways of doing things, and to be able to better articulate their points of view to authority figures. Participants in peer training workshops are empowered by the support and credibility given to youth leaders in the school environment. The school demonstrates respect for pupils' points of views by supporting peer training, and the pupils realise that their participation in society matters.

Schools engaged in the A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ Programme consistently find an exponential impact when it is combined with the Peer Training Programme to create the School Community Approach. When school administrations commit to supporting teachers and youth working together through educational methods, the message of diversity is reinforced and infused throughout the school community.

The goals of Peer Training on the general student population are similar to those of the A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ Programme, with the added dimension of demonstrating the active citizenship of young people.

Usually a two-year intensive process is outlined with the school, taking into account local circumstances, the student population and other factors, to ensure the most effective outcome

based on the school's individual needs. For the schools, a commitment generally encompasses the following:

- Needs assessment;
- Establishment and facilitation of a school community task force;
- Two-day training for 2 groups of teachers (30-40);
- Five-day training for peer trainers;
- Coaching of 40 hours per school for action planning and school development projects.

#### **9. Outcomes** (reports, publications, exhibitions, press releases etc)

The outcomes are often localised and anecdotal, reflecting the new awareness, skills and experience within the school community.

The materials used include a Manual for Peer Trainers (currently available in English, Dutch, French, German and Italian) and a Guide for Teachers with activities to incorporate into the curriculum.

Publications that have been produced as a result of the European network (ACODDEN – A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™-Diversity Education Network) are:

- *The Empowerment of Pupils: A Framework for Educators* (ACODDEN Diversity Education Series, Nr 1; November 2003)
- *Vouloir et Pouvoir Apprendre; ou l'acquisition d'une vraie maîtrise de la langue de l'école* (ACODDEN Diversity Education Series, Nr 2; February 2004)
- *Les Compétences Transversales ; Un concept-clé pour l'éducation à la diversité en Europe. Quelle réalité en Communauté française de Belgique ?* (ACODDEN Diversity Education Series, Nr 2; March 2004)

The ACODDEN Network also published a book on diversity and citizenship:

Giuseppe Ianni and Dina Sensi (eds), *Diversity and Citizenship: a challenge and an opportunity for schools* (CEJI and IRRE Toscana, June 2004)

#### **10. Budget and financial sources**

The programme is supported by a variety of sources, consisting of local funding and a combination of private foundations, public authorities and school contributions. New projects and special initiatives are initiated by CEJI at European level with injections of modest funds to cover pilot projects and the continued Europe-wide exchange of experiences.

#### **11. Overall project results, evaluation**

Outcomes are often localised and anecdotal, reflecting a new awareness, skills and experiences within the school community. The results of an evaluation conducted during the 1999-2000 school year of the A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ Programme showed that teachers believed the training was effective from both the personal and professional points of view. They were very satisfied with the methods used by the trainers. 74% of teachers thought that the training provided them with an approach and exercises which could be used directly in the classroom.

In 2007-2008, an external evaluation will be conducted by the Paris-based European Institute of Education and Social Policy.

#### **12. Follow-up** (planned or already realised)

In 2008-2009 a new pilot project will be tested in each of the countries currently reached by the programme, facilitating a diversity initiative within a clear community context, partnering schools social partner like public authorities, social workers, community associations and local businesses. The objective is to exchange perspectives on the diversity issues confronting a given locality (neighbourhood, city, etc.) and to develop cooperation amongst the partners.

#### **13. Why is this project regarded as an “example of good practice”?**

The School Community Approach carefully balances clear pedagogical structures rooted in anti-prejudice and educational research, with adaptable processes to facilitate optimal results in personal awareness, collective responsibility and school development. The methods and

subjects are applicable to a variety of target groups and are based on participative methods both in the training itself and in the process of school transformation. It has proven its relevance and transferability across nations and cultures, from the USA to 6 European countries to Japan and Argentina.

## European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO)

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**3. Themes** addressed by the project: *Fight against racism, development of participative citizenship, education/training, fight against exclusion, cultural diversity, democracy, minorities, fight against stereotypes, equality between men and women, human rights.*

**4. Target groups (beneficiaries):** Youth workers and young people

**5. Intervention level (international, national, local), geographic area:** Europe

**6. Objectives:**

EPTO's mission is "To promote young people's personal responsibility against prejudice and discrimination by increasing consciousness and understanding, using educational interactive methods that create a respectful environment for everybody."

The objectives of EPTO's activities are to:

- Educate youth leaders to discuss issues related to prejudice and discrimination;
- Challenge stereotypes;
- Promote youth activism against exclusion within youth organisations, schools and society.

**7. Start and end date:** 1996 - present

**8. Description of activities:**

In EPTO's main train-the-trainer programmes, participants will:

- Become aware of their personal and cultural identity;
- Recognise their own prejudices and stereotypes;
- Recognise and confront prejudice and discrimination in all its forms;
- Develop empathy, critical thinking, and communication skills;
- Identify ways to create an inclusive environment;
- Develop an action plan to create peer-led diversity programmes on a national and local scale.

**9. Outcomes** (reports, publications, exhibitions, press releases etc)

**10. Budget and financial sources:** EPTO is supported by a variety of sources for project activities, including: the European Youth Foundation, the European Commission's YOUTH / YOUTH IN ACTION programmes, the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund and the Ford Foundation. Many activities are funded by EC National Agencies via a national member youth organization.

**11. Overall project results, evaluation:**

During its ten years of activities, EPTO has:

- Trained more than 500 Peer Trainers from 12 European countries, who have in turn reached more than 7000 additional young people with diversity awareness workshops;

- Developed a functioning pool of professional trainers who can train new peer trainers and who have successfully entered the career field of “Youth”;
- Set up an on-going network of more than 20 local, national and international youth organisations committed to diversity and anti-discrimination;
- Published an effective Manual for Peer Trainers for use at European level, that has been translated into Dutch, German, French and Italian;
- Contributed to changing school climates by integrating the method of peer training with the teacher training programme A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™;
- Created a self-sustaining mechanism for quality assurance and continued trainer-skills development through a structured system of coaching;
- Contributed to European youth policies and programmes through formal consultations (such as the EU White Paper 2001), conferences (such as Youth in Action for Diversity and Tolerance in Berlin 2001 and 2005) and working groups (such as the All Different All Equal Campaign 2006);
- Cooperated with other youth networks on the creation of peer education initiatives, such as the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL) and the Directorate for Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe on the topic of inter-religious dialogue, and the Youth Express Network for training peer trainers;
- Created a variety of promotional materials to ensure a constant influx of new participants and to create a unified identity of the network;
- Been strengthened by a continuous evolution of its organisational structure to arrive at a legally independent youth association that promotes peer education on a variety of topics related to diversity and anti-discrimination.

EPTO is the only European youth association that deals with all forms of discrimination.

#### **12. Follow-up** (planned or already realised):

Priorities for the next 3 years include:

- Recognition and certification of trainers/trainees: Creating common quality standards and a certification/recognition strategy;
- Promoting and developing peer training programmes, including subject-specific educational modules;
- Taking stock of the network’s own resources and producing a training catalogue;
- Reinforce structure and increase impact of local teams;
- Recruitment strategy: Involve younger generations and heretofore uninvolved minorities;
- Develop a strategy to create a better work life–volunteering balance;
- Guarantee financial sustainability for structural activities;
- Develop internal communication and information channels;
- Partner with minority organizations at local and European levels.

#### **13. Why is this project regarded as an “example of good practice”?**

A CEJI youth initiative, the peer training programme started as a pilot project in 1996. The intention was to train an international group of youth leaders on how to leading workshops and discussions on issues of anti-discrimination and identity, using peer education methods. In the 10 years since its inception, EPTO has developed into a European network of young people, youth workers and organisations active in the field of youth training and empowerment. About to register as an autonomous organisation, EPTO sets an example for youth empowerment, self-determination and sustainability, supported by CEJI’s contributions and mentorship.

EPTO has developed solid pedagogical resources and mobilises young Europeans with the spirit of a youth movement and youth activism against all forms of discrimination.

EPTO presents dialogue and education as forms of social change. Led by young people for young people, EPTO’s activism involves young participants from diverse backgrounds in terms of ethnic and national origins, cultural references, social upbringing, physical and mental capabilities, gender and sexual identity, religious belonging or belief. The pedagogical

process contained in EPTO's programme facilitates interaction and dialogue between youth as a strategy to build positive intercultural relationships and respect for the individual in a spectrum of multiple identities.

EPTO is the only European youth organisation that deals with all forms of discrimination. It does this by:

- a) Ensuring the application of educational activities that explore the geometry of power between social groups – both privileged ones and those affected by different forms of discrimination in our society;
- b) Gathering in the same learning space, young people who give voices and serve as human examples to situations of social conflict by sharing their personal experience of belonging to a particular social group. Thus the participants develop empathy and understanding of life's difficulties and opportunities in a larger, yet more personal, context;
- c) Building the capacity of young people from unprivileged groups to intervene and influence their social context through peer education, empowered by their own learning and development in using educational methods and enhancing their leadership roles in facilitating activities.

## Religious Diversity Training Module

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**3. Themes** addressed by the project: Communication, social cohesion, equality, fight against discrimination and racism, adult education/training, fight against exclusion, interreligious dialogue, cultural diversity, intercultural learning, raising awareness of religious practices, fight against stereotypes, integration, conflict prevention, human rights, antisemitism, islamophobia.

**4. Target groups (beneficiaries):** Adult educators throughout Europe. The programme is not an interfaith initiative, it rather aims to empower educators to deal with issues of religious diversity and anti-discrimination they encounter in their educational settings. The programme is open to people of all faiths, beliefs, and senses of religious and non-religious belonging.

**5. Intervention level (international, national, local), geographic area:** The programme aims to reach adult educators from throughout the European Union, and is open for applications through the catalogue of Grundtvig Training Courses.

## **6. Objectives**

The specific objectives of the Training are to:

- Raise participants' consciousness of the uniqueness of each individual's religious identity;
- Facilitate dialogue and sharing of experiences in the area of religion and culture;
- Increase participants' understanding of the concepts and issues related to religious diversity;
- Enable participants to recognize contemporary manifestations of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination related to religion, with specific training activities on antisemitism and islamophobia;
- Develop an appreciation for the complexity and richness of religious diversity;
- Develop individual skills and institutional strategies for creating inclusive intercultural environments.

**7. Start and end date:** October 2005 – September 2007

**8. Description of activities:** The project began with the development of training material regarding religious diversity in Europe, and educational activities tackling issues that come up in the classroom. After an initial development phase, carried out by the various partners in the project, the educational training programme was launched with a pilot training in October 2006, held at the Multifaith Centre at the University of Derby. Participants included representatives of the partner organizations in the project.

The first open training took place in Sofia, Bulgaria, in March 2007, and more trainings are foreseen in Rome, Italy, in May 2007 and in Brussels in June 2007.

**9. Outcomes:** The materials produced include a 20-hour training programme on religious diversity; two 8-hour training modules, one each on antisemitism and islamophobia; a Trainers Manual containing pedagogical tools; participant handbooks with a variety of cultural information; and a validation and certification mechanism of competencies gained through the programme. Participants can receive university-level (ECTS) credit for learning achieved through the training programme.

At the time of the pilot training in October 2006, CEJI published a press release announcing the programme. The press release, entitled "CEJI Announces Launch of Religious Diversity & Anti-Discrimination Training", is available on the CEJI website, [www.ceji.org/press](http://www.ceji.org/press). The press release announcing the first open training in the programme in March 2007, "Religious Diversity & Anti-Discrimination Training for Adult Educators held in Bulgaria", is also available on this site.

**10. Budget and financial sources:** The project has a budget of around € 195.000, and is funded jointly by the Grundtvig Programme of the European Commission and the Ford Foundation.

**11. Overall project results, evaluation:** In the two trainings that have taken place under the auspices of the programme so far, over 30 adult educators have been trained. Currently, two trainings further are foreseen, aiming for a similar number of participants. Based on informal questioning and the amount of response received to the calls for participants, CEJI is glad to say that there is serious interest in the topic among educators. The participants have clearly noted in their feedback that the programme fills a need that exists today in the field of education.

As the programme has only recently reached its implementation stage, no evaluation has taken place yet. The extent to which evaluations will take place, will depend on future funding for the training project.

**12. Follow-up** (planned or already realised): The partner organizations are applying to renew the grant that enabled the programme's development. With renewed funding, the programme will be able to continue in its current state, attracting participants from various backgrounds to be trained. Meanwhile, CEJI and its partners continue to search for opportunities to organize trainings in an efficient manner.

**13. Why is this project regarded as an “example of good practice”?**

Issues related to religious diversity are becoming increasingly important in European society. CEJI's work in the field of diversity education and anti-discrimination, in formal and non-formal learning environments, has revealed a real need to prepare educators to deal effectively with religiously diverse populations. For this reason, CEJI engaged in the development of the Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Training for adult educators and community associations. This is currently the only Europe-wide education programme that deals with this topic.

The programme aims to address diversity and discrimination issues related to religion, with subject-specific modules on antisemitism and islamophobia. As such, the programme contributes to an improvement in the delivery of adult education where religious diversity and discrimination is a concern. It is designed in the spirit of anti-prejudice diversity education: to recognize and respect multicultural diversity, to confront prejudice and discrimination, and to develop intercultural skills. The course welcomes people of all faiths and senses of religious and non-religious belonging. Rather than an interfaith programme, the programme is geared to dealing with the subject of religion as an identity in an increasingly secular Europe.

This innovative project uses methods that have proven effective in dealing with prejudice and discrimination in general, engaging the participants in a series of activities using intercultural learning methods. The methodology is highly interactive and participatory, building on participants' experiences to address practical situations.

The programme raises participants' consciousness of individual religious identity and enables them to develop an appreciation for the complexity and richness of religious diversity through an increased understanding of the concepts and issues related to it. Ultimately, they are empowered to recognize contemporary manifestations of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination related to religion and develop individual skills and institutional strategies for creating inclusive intercultural environments.

The project integrates the use of information and communication technologies, such as digital video equipment, distance learning contracts and supervision, and the MultiFaithnet.org website. A planned by-product of the programme is the diverse partnership of organisations that form an educational coalition for religious diversity in Europe, consisting partly of organisations involved in the development of the programme.

The development of this training in the framework of adult education makes it possible to adapt its methods and content to other education settings, both formal and non-formal.

## European Jewish-Muslim Dialogue Project / European Platform for Jewish-Muslim Cooperation

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**3. Themes** addressed by the project: *Communication, social cohesion, equality, fight against discrimination and racism, development of participative citizenship, history/collective memory, cities/urban areas, fight against exclusion, solidarity between generations, international solidarity, interreligious dialogue, cultural diversity, intercultural learning, raising awareness of religious practices, minorities, fight against stereotypes, integration, equality between men and women, conflict prevention, cultural co-operation, freedom of expression, human rights, media, antisemitism, islamophobia.*

**4. Target groups (beneficiaries):** Initiators of and participants in Jewish-Muslim dialogue activities on the local and national levels in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

**5. Intervention level (international, national, local), geographic area:** Currently the project covers the six countries mentioned above. CEJI aims to eventually include in the project other countries with active Jewish-Muslim dialogue initiatives.

### 6. Objectives

The creation of a framework for European Jewish-Muslim dialogue aims to:

- Identify common ground for cooperation between Muslim and Jewish communities;
- Exchange local practices and experiences in dialogue;
- Stimulate, encourage and strengthen local initiatives and activities to offer a space for appreciating each other;
- Promote successful partnership based on constructive action towards positive and equitable intercultural relations;
- Facilitate understanding of Jewish and Muslim values and provide a European setting for resolving differences and shared issues;
- Promote and develop innovative approaches to dialogue, understanding, citizenship and peace;
- Create awareness, through communication, amongst a larger public on the existence of those initiatives;
- Showcase Jewish-Muslim dialogue initiatives to the European institutions and to international organisations.

Addressing those issues will allow the Steering Committee of the project to create and make available a list of 'best practices' that could be replicated at local level, to generate a useful and genuine dialogue between Jewish and Muslim communities on the continent.

**7. Start and end date:** May 2006 – June 2007

**8. Description of activities:** The European Jewish-Muslim Dialogue project culminated in the conference that took place from 15-17 April 2007 in Brussels.

The first steps toward this conference were taken through the creation of a Steering Committee, including representatives of Jewish and Muslim communities from the countries involved. The Steering

Committee met regularly to set the agenda for the project, and commissioned Mapping Reports of local and national Jewish-Muslim dialogue initiatives. National contact persons were identified in each country to create the mapping reports. These reports assess the state of dialogue on the ground, identify the local and national initiatives and single out the best practices that are amenable to duplication, which in many places happened for the first time. From this, the participants at the dialogue conference were able to discuss strategies for promoting Jewish-Muslim dialogue at local and national levels.

The conference took place in April, welcoming over 50 participants. Many more showed interest but had to be turned away for lack of space and resources. Simultaneous interpretation was provided in English and French. The European Jewish-Muslim Dialogue Conference brought together, for the first time, participants in Jewish-Muslim dialogue projects from various countries, with the aim of creating an informal network for continued cooperation and programme development. In fact, the participants at the conference found there was a consensus to go even further: in stead of discussing dialogue alone, there was overwhelming support for the establishment of a European Platform for Jewish-Muslim Cooperation, to both encourage and to raise the profile of local, national and Europe-wide dialogue and cooperation initiatives.

In providing a forum for the sharing of experiences, ideas and good practices, the Conference also witnessed the initiation of new partnerships between organisations and the development of project ideas in the arts, media coverage of Jewish and Muslim issues, religious diversity training, grassroots involvement, academic co-operation and joint lobbying efforts. Awards for best practice in Jewish-Muslim co-operative initiatives were also proposed.

**9. Outcomes:** Mapping Reports of local Jewish-Muslim dialogue initiatives in the five participating countries.

**10. Budget and financial sources:** The project has a budget of around € 101.000, and is funded jointly by the European Commission and the Ford Foundation.

### **11. Overall project results, evaluation**

The first results of the project include the creation of a Steering Committee, the first step to making a European platform for dialogue initiatives a priority for national and local project-leaders. The creation of Mapping Reports on local initiatives was another step to creating a more Europe-wide scope to Jewish-Muslim dialogue. This, of course, was followed by the conference held in April, allowing dialogue practitioners to share their experiences, but moreover, to stimulate them to take their dialogue to the next, more international, level.

No formal evaluation of the project as a whole has taken place yet, as the project is only in its first stages. Meanwhile, the feedback received from participants in the conference was very positive, and the Steering Committee will informally survey the participants of the conference to gauge in a more structured manner what the next steps in the project should be in order to serve currently existing needs in the various countries involved.

### **12. Follow-up**

The first steps in follow-up include the restructuring of the Steering Committee to better reflect the participating countries. This will enable more sustainable international contact between the local dialogue initiatives. Funding allowing, the Mapping Reports will be finalised and published to give a more comprehensive overview of currently active grassroots initiatives.

CEJI also aims to circulate a series of tools that would constitute shared norms of coexistence and dialogue and a compilation of best practices. This is aimed at stimulating other Muslim and Jewish communities to embark on their own dialogue projects, leading eventually to their inclusion in the European Platform created at the conference.

Another envisioned step is the creation of a strategic action plan for the European Platform for Jewish-Muslim Cooperation, to enable ongoing cooperation and mutual support on the European level.

CEJI hopes, once these steps are underway, to commission a proper evaluation of the European Jewish-Muslim Dialogue initiative, including some of the local dialogue projects.

### **13. Why is this project regarded as an “example of good practice”?**

Jewish and Muslim people have a lot in common, both living as minorities in a predominantly Christian if mostly secular European society. These two communities – defined in terms of religion but also often culturally and ethnically distinct from the ‘mainstream’ – can complement each other and add to the cultural and spiritual richness of European societies.

Supporting direct contact between communities is an essential step to creating enduring good relations between these two minorities, and much good work is already going on at local level. These projects need to be celebrated and the good practice shared on the European level to maximise their potential and create political support for dialogue on the international and national levels.

Knowledge of good practices and relevant ideas are rarely shared, and the people involved at a local level too often feel they are isolated, lack support, and miss the opportunity to exchange ideas and practices with others. Many think that they are operating in a vacuum, having to ‘pioneer’ ideas and projects as they try to generate a dialogue between communities. Often, this lack of information sharing can be counterproductive as some genuine “errors” can be made and the damage is sometimes hard to repair. Indeed, Jewish-Muslim dialogue, like dialogue between all communities, is full of pitfalls. It is felt that an overall network of ideas and good practices would be most welcome.

While Europe-wide religious exchanges already exist at the level of Rabbis and Imams (such as the Council of Europe’s Conference on “The Religious Dimension of the Intercultural Dialogue”, held in April 2007 in San Marino), few actually reach the levels of communities and individuals. This CEJI initiative focuses on setting up a platform of resources and the gathering of ‘good practices’ to enable communities to foster relations between their respective members and create a local atmosphere of respect and understanding. We see this direct contact between communities as an essential step to creating enduring good relations between these two minorities in Europe. This need to focus on lay-leadership in religious communities was demonstrated by the fact that the participants in the Jewish-Muslims Dialogue Conference were mostly lay leaders, including many women.

The Jewish–Muslim Dialogue initiative touches the core of CEJI’s role in nurturing intercultural relations in Europe. A European Jewish-Muslim Dialogue is needed to inspire and promote partnership for an inclusive Europe.