



Ideas for Peace Series
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The Role of Education
in Achieving Peace
Ouided Bouchamaoui



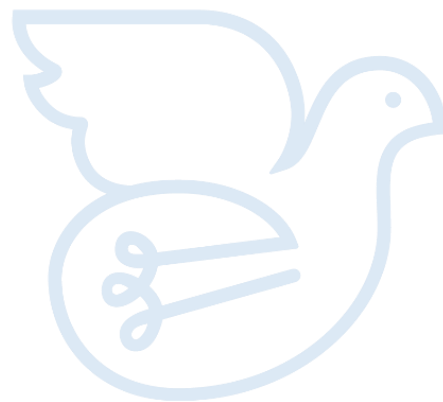
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The Role of Education in Achieving Peace



THE AUTHOR

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She holds a DESS (Master's Degree) in International Business from Institut Supérieur de Gestion of Tunis (ISG Business School) and a DESS in International Trade Law from the Faculty of Juridical and Political Sciences of Tunis. Since May 2011, Mrs. Guided Bouchamaoui has presided the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), becoming the first woman elected to this position. In 2013, Mrs. Guided Bouchamaoui was elected "Best Business Woman of the Arab World". In 2015, she received the Peace Nobel for the creation of "The Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet", Tunisian President, Mr. Beji Caid Essebsi awarded her the title of Grand Officer of the Order of the Republic - First Class - and His Majesty the King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden decorated Mrs. Bouchamaoui of the Royal Order of the Polar Star.

Since 2018 she is UPEACE Council Member

SUMMARY

This *Ideas for Peace Series* is a reproduction of Mrs. Bouchamaoui's speech at UPEACE's 2018 Commencement Ceremony in Costa Rica in June 2018.

- ❖ The Human Rights conventions declare: "Education must prepare a child for responsible life and effective participation in a free society, in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendships among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin."
- ❖ Indeed, tragedies caused by under-development, poverty, exclusion, unemployment, ignorance, social tensions, conflicts, wars and terrorism are all daily reminders of the prominence of the issues related to education and peace and of the extent to which they are intertwined.
- ❖ Education, learning, teaching are the most powerful tools to promote peace.



THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN ACHIEVING PEACE

Being in front of you today gives me joy and satisfaction as your Institution is an example, one of those we dream about. And the dream comes true! Its reputation shines all over the world, demonstrating a will of tolerance, understanding of different cultures and an awareness to reinforce shared values as an aim for peaceful and democratic societies.

Because, never in the history of mankind have the subjects of education and peace been so acutely and seriously felt. We are constantly reminded of their importance by the daily tragedies occurring in the four corners of the planet. The Human Rights conventions declare: "Education must prepare a child for responsible life and effective participation in a free society, in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendships among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin." And this declaration should not be narrowed to only Youth. PEACE is a matter that affects the whole world and every one of us.

As we are standing here in this prestigious University, let me first state some figures about education, because not everybody has the chance to get where we are:

1. Around the world 59 (fifty-nine) million children of primary school age are being denied an education, and almost 65 (sixty-five) million adolescents are without access to a secondary school.
2. Conflict and natural disasters have disrupted the education of 75 (seventy-five) million children.
3. Nearly 15 (fifteen) million girls of primary school age will never have the opportunity to learn to read and write in primary school, compared to about 10 million boys.
4. In 2015 (two thousand fifteen), the total number of illiterate adults reached 745.1 (seven hundred forty-five point one) million.

Indeed, tragedies caused by under-development, poverty, exclusion, unemployment, ignorance, social tensions, conflicts, wars and terrorism are all daily reminders of the prominence of the issues related to education and peace and of the extent to which they are intertwined. In our daily struggle against all those problems we can only brandish peace as a weapon. We do it by promoting education, sport, culture, and all



values underlying “living together” such as tolerance, accepting others no matter how different they are in nationality, race, faith, or skin color. We must stand united against atrocity, decadence, fear, intimidation, and all those who want to spread terror.

It is through propagating knowledge and upholding the universal values of coming together, tolerance and freedom, through investing in art and culture, and through providing equal chances and fair access to wealth, that freedom-loving countries can forever consecrate peace as a daily practice and stand steadfast in the face of all types of extremists. By being anchored in the values of tolerance and openness, the University of Peace creates opportunities for people to come together internationally and engage in actions which consecrate these values.

Today, mankind is facing a serious challenge: create a world with stronger bonds of solidarity. It must be a world full of justice and equality, where sharing and mutual respect are daily practices, and where the wellbeing of everyone comes from his or her contribution to the general prosperity.

Because of the violent transformations happening in our world, and because ignorance, intolerance, exclusion, and underdevelopment are feeding conflicts and violence, we have to more than ever respond with education for peace, human rights, democracy, tolerance and mutual understanding between cultures; in other words, we have to educate future citizens of this world about the principles of “living together”, about respecting each other and transcending all of our differences, be they in culture, religion, origin, or other.

We need to create bonds of friendship beyond our frontiers; we need to be curious about other ways of life. History teaches us that whenever cultures met each other for peaceful exchanges of ideas and knowledge, the entire humanity progressed. It is then our duty to keep that flame burning.

Educating youth on how to become citizens must also be done in a global perspective. But this should not be applied only to youth but to each one of us. We ALL should be identified as earthlings as we are not defined by our nationality, our race, or our religion. So, we need to find ways to raise awareness because we are facing issues, crucial to the future of all mankind. In an increasingly interconnected world, where the actions of each one of us can have far away consequences, there is no longer room for policies of isolationism, exclusion, and closure. Our destiny is to live together; so why not have future generations develop right now their understanding of the concept of “living together” and the competencies needed for that? Education, learning, teaching are the most powerful tools to promote peace. As the philosopher Confucius said: “Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace.”



Our modest experience in the National Dialogue in Tunisia has taught us that whenever there is a will to do it, living together is possible. Thanks to dialogue, to listening to what the other has to say, and to a common desire to transcend our differences, we were able, with our social partners, to extirpate our country from its political crisis. It is obvious that experiencing intercultural learning as applied here can only strengthen the values of dialogue and openness.

I thank you once again for this opportunity to speak in front of this assembly who embody the future of our world, which, given the quality of the students, will be a new milestone in the promotion of Peace.

