

## **Global Citizenship and nonviolent education**

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### **International Conference**

**The vision of King Abdullah II: Citizenship and the development of society**

**University of Petra, Amman, Jordan, April 2919**

For more than five years, the Berghof Foundation has been working in Jordan with teachers, social workers and university professors as well as with non-governmental organizations, state institutions and ministries in a very close and trustful cooperation. Since 2016 the project „Nonviolent education in Jordan“ is being supported by the German Federal Foreign Office. Together with an excellent expert team we have organized and implemented more than 200 workshops, several conferences and qualification courses in Jordan and even in Germany. We were successful in developing sustainable programmes step by step such as the project „Schools without violence“ or the „Curriculum for civic and nonviolent education“.

Attending today's conference is another highlight in this unique cooperation. Thank you very much for the invitation and many thanks to all those who prepared this conference. It is really a great pleasure and honor to be here.

I remember very clearly when, two years ago, I first studied King Abdullah's statement about the „Developing Human Resources and Education Imperative for Jordan's Progress“. He described exactly what needs to be on stated the current agenda when we are thinking about the future of education in Jordan but also worldwide. He said:

„Therefore, modern teaching methods should be adopted to encourage critical and deductive thinking, rather than rote learning. Moreover, these methods should combine theory and practice, field and classroom, as well as analysis and planning. Such an educational system would widen horizons for our youth, so that they can excel in every art, profession, or craft. (...) Education is an effective tool to transcend differences and build

common ground to spread tolerance and understanding, and shun bigotry and extremism. There can be no comprehensive reform without an educational transformation.“

*Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein: Developing Human Resources and Education Imperative for Jordan's Progress. 15 April 2017*

Why is „educational transformation“ so important and what kind of (small and large) contributions can we make?

### **Youth: Looking for orientation and identity**

Today we are living in a world full of change and challenges. Especially young people and students are looking for orientation. They want to find their specific role as citizens of Jordan on the one hand and as a human being in this globalized world on the other. Many of them find their way, but others do not. They see no place in society for themselves and they do not feel valued. As in many other countries, there are not enough perspectives after graduation. Often, they also feel that they are no longer understood by their family. Moreover, it is especially tragic if they have the experience that they are not needed in society. They feel like strangers – even at the university.

It is not easy for our youth to find their own personal and social identity facing the complexity of this world. In addition the current problem of Fake News is immense and makes it increasingly difficult to know which information and sources are or are not credible. How to find credible information, especially in social media? Anyone who has no experience in using social media is easily lost in the virtual world of Fake News and even Hates Speeches. The road to extremism and violence is not far away.

In recent years, much has been said about violence at Jordanian universities. Scientific studies have been published on this topic and conferences have been held. It is a good sign that a public discussion is taking place and that action is being taken. Overcoming violence in families, schools or universities requires long-term concepts. Education can make an important contribution to this.

In the past, we have often talked about youth as perpetrators or victims of violence, but young people are also important as peacebuilders. The UN has therefore rightly emphasized in its Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (2015) that young people should not only be perceived as perpetrators or victims of violence but also as "change agents".

Young people need our support to discover their identity as a peacebuilder. Therefore they have the right to be strengthened in their commitment.

Young people need in-depth knowledge of how to better understand current events in their home country and in the world. They must have opportunities to be fully informed about the background, relations and escalation risks of violence, terror and war. In a world full of violence, it is important to be able to deal with violence on different levels. However, it is just as important as having space to think about their own understanding of peace. How do I imagine living together with others in my environment, within the society and worldwide? Which contribution can and do I want to make?

Last, but not least: Young people have to learn how to deal with conflicts in a constructive way without using violence and they have to be aware of diversity as a chance for living together.

For all this they must be able to participate as an active citizen, based on common values. More than ever young people need support so that they can learn together how to engage nonviolently for a civil society.

Linking citizenship to personal identity and the ability to find orientation in the globalized world is very important. I'm convinced, that educational concepts such as citizenship education, global learning and nonviolent education can make a huge contribution to this.

### **Citizenship and nonviolent education**

What are the essential elements of these important concepts?

In the relevant documents of the UNESCO we can read, that the knowledge of the nation's institutions, and also an awareness that the rule of law applies to social and human relationships, obviously form a part of any citizenship education course. Taken in this sense, citizenship education is based on the distinction between:

- the individual as a subject of ethics and law, entitled to all the rights inherent in the human condition (human rights); and
- the citizen – entitled to the civil and political rights recognized by the national constitution of the country concerned.

In this sense all human beings are both individuals and citizens of the society to which they belong. Therefore, human rights and citizen rights are interdependent.

Global citizenship goes one step further. It refers to a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity. It emphasises political, economic, social and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global.

Core conceptual dimensions of global citizenship education are:

*Cognitive:* To acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnections and interdependency of different countries and populations.

*Socio-emotional:* To have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.

*Behavioural:* To act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

*UNESCO (2015): Global Citizenship Education. Topics and learning objectives. Paris, 15.*

## **Curriculum and manual for universities**

Against this background we decided - together with our expert team from different Jordanian universities - to develop a curriculum and a manual for teaching citizenship and nonviolent education at universities.

The curriculum will contain six units:

- Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development Goals
- Citizenship and the Rule of Law
- Digital Citizenship in Social Media
- Diversity and the Acceptance of Others
- Culture of Dialogue and the Right to Difference
- Violence Prevention

A few days ago we were able to test successfully the first modules together with several university professors within the higher education of Jordan. If we continue our work as good as in the past, the results will be available in July 2019.

We are aware that formal education only covers part of the life in which young people learn. Hence, it is important for universities to send out a signal for lifelong learning. In this sense, together we can make a huge contribution to establishing a culture of nonviolence. In the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", which was adopted by all member states in September 2015 at a United Nations summit, we can read:

„By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence,

global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.“

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