



## Final Statement on Globalisation and Education

A Joint Working Group of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences



This Statement on Globalization and Education was produced by the joint workshop on the same subject of 16-17 November 2005 which was held at Casina Pio IV. On the basis of a text by Prof. Léna, Prof. Malinvaud, and the Bishop-Chancellor Sánchez, and in response to proposals made by the President of the PAS, Prof. Cabibbo, Prof. Battro, Prof. Gardner, Prof. Hide, Prof. Llach, Prof. Mittelstrass, Prof. Ramirez, Prof. Ryan, and Prof. Suárez Orozco, followed by a discussion between Prof. Léna, Prof. Malinvaud and the Chancellor, this document was formally approved by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.

A human community that always thinks anew the goals of education possesses a healthy circulation of ideas and energies for the good of its members. Each generation should re-consider how to pass on its culture to its successors for it is through education that man becomes fully who he is, aware, free and responsible, a citizen of the world. To think about education is to think about future generations and thus is rooted in hope and requires generosity.

Globalization properly managed may provide a chance for education and peace, bringing human beings closer to one another and fostering the sharing of common values.

As in all human matters, education first and foremost must have an idea of what a human being is, because men and women are those who are educated and those who educate. Thus education must answer a key question, namely: what do we know today about men and women? The workshop sought to examine what an educational project could be in an increasingly globalized world. This project must be based on our current bio-anthropological knowledge of men and

women, in dialogue with the sciences, within the context of the diversity and interdependence of cultures and the universality of religious, anthropological and ethical values, which increasingly intersect with communication and information technology, as well as with the new patterns of international migration.

In our globalized world, the problem of justice is central: namely that all men and women, wherever they are and whatever their condition of life, should have the right to, and the possibility of, a good education and general access to culture. This means a goal of basic education – up to nine years – for all, then secondary and higher education on the basis of abilities and resources. Clearly, the globalized world also implies an improvement in education not only for the inhabitants of the developing world but also for the developed one. For all people today there is a tremendous wealth of knowledge which is unparalleled in history and which should be made available through new and suitable processes of synthesis and transmission. Everyone has the right to an education that sees the environment as a home, so as to prevent it from becoming harmful to health and well-being.

The workshop reached the following conclusions:

1. Despite the many declarations and statements of objectives, enunciated by the United Nations and other agencies, and despite significant efforts in some countries, education remains extraordinarily uneven within the world population, although the resources needed to improve this situation do not seem to be out of reach. A special cause for concern over the last decade has been the divergence and growing inequality, which is concomitant with globalization and related to policies in education, between developed or emerging countries and stagnating ones, the latter being caught in a poverty trap.
2. Given the growing importance of education, now more important than ever before in human history, of equal cause for concern is the wide and frequently increasing quality gap between schools attended by the poor and schools attended by those who are not poor. This happens in such a way that differentiated or segregated educational pathways often emerge. Most alarming is the fact that world-wide nearly 200 million children and young people who should be receiving basic education are not enrolled in school at all.
3. Today, in the face of globalization, global migrations, the explosion of knowledge and the concomitant emergence of a knowledge-intensive economy, and above all the compelling obligation to fight poverty by all means throughout the world, education may require serious re-thinking. The adverse consequences of inadequate education policies for poor people are amplified by globalization.
4. Globalization has provoked an unprecedented increase in migrant populations either within host countries or within large countries. Today, international migrations are an integral part of global

development. Migrations can be an extremely positive factor in mutual understanding and the mixing of cultures. Education plays an important role in the integration of the children of immigrants world-wide. While some of the children of immigrant families do better at school than the children of indigenous families, others seem to be marked out early on for social rejection and the experience of problems. Reducing the fracture with native cultures and languages, and helping to maintain family stability, are among some of the paths by which to achieve improvements in this area.

5. Education should aim at the full development of the human person, the promotion of the meaning of human dignity, and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It should enable all persons to participate effectively in the human family and should advance understanding, friendship, and co-operation between all peoples, ethnic groups and religious communities. Education should also transmit knowledge, higher-order cognitive skills and the interpersonal sensibility required to help boys, girls, men and women to become fully themselves and to interact with others. It should develop their ability to observe, to reason, to synthesize and create ethical values, and to develop a sense of justice, respect, tolerance, and compassion for others. It should emphasize the responsibility of people to protect the environment for the benefit of present and future generations, preventing pollution and ecological deterioration and promoting conservation and sustainable development. In its transmission of knowledge and its fostering of creativity, education should convey the deep lessons of the past and communicate the opportunities and risks that will be faced by humanity in the future.

6. In particular in the context of globalization, respect for cultural diversity and the preservation of the elements of cultural identity are essential in the educational process. New generations have to understand in a clear way their own culture in relation to other cultures in order to develop self-awareness when facing cultural changes and to promote peaceful understanding and tolerance, thereby identifying and encouraging true human values within an intercultural perspective.

7. At the same time, education should aim to establish that common sense of humanity which is essential for the maintenance of peace. This could be achieved by drawing on the universality of ethical principles and norms, which are, for instance, expressed in the concepts of human rights and the dignity of the person, as well as on the universality of knowledge, wisdom and science. It is thus also necessary to offer at some points in the educational process the new image of the universe that the scientific community has proposed of the cosmos, the earth, life, and the emergence of humans and their societies.

8. The relativist and nihilistic tendencies of some modern movements, which Benedict XVI and his predecessors have criticized with increasing force, have been matched by a welcome and progressive return of ethical, philosophical and religious questions. The 'wonder' that stimulated the origin of science and the path taken by science has not diminished but increased with the new discoveries in the physical and life sciences. This 'new world', which has been increasingly

investigated by man, has given rise to even greater amazement at the universe which could open up a new positive horizon of meaning by which to understand the mystery of the Creation. In this way, as a result of science, religion and philosophy have returned to the fore, as is demonstrated by the increasing attention paid to their recognized roles in their quest for truth. From this springs the need to take into account science, philosophy and religion, and their correlative interdisciplinary dialogue, in establishing a sound anthropological basis as the pre-condition of education today.

9. Education begins in the maternal womb and at birth. Mothers, fathers and families in their primary educational role need help to understand – in the new global context – the importance of this early stage in life, and should be prepared to act accordingly. One of the critical paths to a higher quality of education at the school level is the increased participation of families and local communities in the governance of their educational projects.

10. Human development depends upon multiple parameters such as education, health, and cultural visions of the family and of the respective roles of men and women in human society. Yet it can be asserted that education, especially at the primary level, remains dramatically insufficient in some parts of the world. The ‘classic’ basic skills expected of primary education – reading, writing and arithmetic – are no longer sufficient in a globalized world. They need to be supplemented by skills leading towards such objectives as the improvement, the protection or the preservation of work abilities, the cultural and linguistic heritage, ethical values, social cohesion, and the environment. In the future, this classic triad may expand into a new objective: ‘reading, writing, mathematics, reasoning, synthesising’.

11. Teaching requires on the part of teachers a high level of knowledge so that students, who learn through the process of instruction, may achieve a standard of education that they would not obtain on their own. Their role as agents of education has to be recognised and supported by every possible means: for example, continuous coaching by those who have a more direct access to knowledge (especially trained scholars and scientists), the updating of professional training, suitable salaries, and the availability of information technology. In order to facilitate a successful educational process, and so as to provide every member of society, and communities themselves, with that level of knowledge and learning which is a primary factor in conferring autonomy and encouraging co-operation, it is important to aim for high standards of quality within the teaching profession, especially at the level of higher education. This is also required so that, given that the expertise of every teacher is limited, what a student does not learn from one teacher he or she may learn from another, and so that teachers may learn from each other within a context of synergy. To support and promote this dual process, which is at the origin of schools, universities and other educational institutions, suitable national, international and private resources must be made available to them so that, throughout the world, they can carry out their tasks in an effective way.

12. Communication and information technology (IT) offers extraordinary opportunities for the renewal of education because of its capacity to connect people, its ability to promote the accessibility of remote areas, its decreasing costs, and the potential volume of the information it can convey. It will thus be possible to reduce the costs of education for each child, even in poor areas. However, IT tools do not necessarily achieve education on their own. They need to be accompanied by a conceptual vision in order to promote dialogue, the active participation of teachers, the organisation of knowledge, and an awareness of the importance of values.