



Associazione culturale “**Giuseppe Dossetti: i Valori**”
TUTELA E SVILUPPO DEI DIRITTI

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Osservatorio per la Tolleranza e la Libertà Religiosa
Observatory for Religious Tolerance and Freedom

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Session 5: The role of human rights youth education in promoting mutual understanding and respect for diversity in accordance with the existing OSCE commitments

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Education, especially at school, play a great role in the promotion of religious tolerance and non-discrimination because it address the roots of the phenomenon. Mingling with students belonging to different religions is in itself a great help to understand the unity of the humankind. Moreover, it is important that school teaches about different religions and permits to each student to manifest and tell her or his belief. Knowledge about the other’s religion can reduce harmful misunderstanding and stereotypes.

Educational programmes should be developed and strengthened in order to promote a better understanding and respect for different cultures, ethnicities and religions. These programmes should also hand on some superior values as the dignity of every person and the solidarity among people. The education to respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms is not less important, both for students at all level as well as for those attending military, police and public service schools.

According to the indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation of human dimension commitments, in developing and performing these programmes participating States should always respect the right of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

Many States, in fact, provide – or intend to provide – in public school compulsory teachings on ethical or religious subjects. Such teachings are appreciable but it should be bear in mind that States cannot pursue an aim of indoctrination and children cannot be forced to a teaching that is not consistent with the convictions of their parents. Therefore it is preferable that such teachings are facultative but when they are compulsory, participating States should provide non-punitive and non-discriminatory opt-out possibilities.