

DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF PEACE

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Our age is the age of globalism, where the fast development of communication systems has led to cooperation between nations, especially in the fields of commerce and industry. In parallel, regionalism has increased as neighboring countries are uniting in the struggle for economic influence over other countries. This has led to the marginalism of countries due to their political, racial or religious backgrounds, affecting these nations' inner peace and socioeconomic stability.

Children are the most perceptive group and they are deeply affected by the new situations which concern most of the countries in the world. They need a healthy environment in which to develop their knowledge and skills, and they need solidarity to produce solutions to problems.

In developed countries, most of the children's health problems have been solved, and they live and develop in an atmosphere of stable socioeconomic conditions; however, in less developed countries the children are faced with problems such as finding food, developing immunity and finding a warm house, while living in an atmosphere of fluctuating socioeconomic conditions during their development.

Since the only possible way to rectify the socioeconomic structure is to have a highly educated human force, the need to develop good communications with other nations cannot be denied. This should be made obligatory in the development and education of youth. Regardless of their social, religious, racial or economic backgrounds, the children of the world can be educated towards the same purpose in many fields, particularly environmental consciousness, social justice principles, independent world communities, living in peace and developing tolerance for other cultures.

In addition to the changes that should be made in schools' curricula, the youth groups, scouting institutions, career education institutions and associations should in their educational activities give importance to teaching the youth that the only route to healthy development is to discuss differences with each other and to try to understand each other instead of fighting.

The universities are a source of development because they produce, distribute and use knowledge. For this reason they can be used to make changes in the elementary and high school curricula, and they can develop new methods for

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effective education. Also, cooperation between universities will enable such projects to be carried out, developed and distributed.

Children are the sensitive group of a population who are deeply affected by socioeconomic struggles. They need special attention through programs and activities which can serve to protect them.

The people of the world can share similar perspectives, behaviors and attitudes only by knowing each other and by cooperating in shared situations. In order to secure the peaceful development of our world, UNICEF launched an education program called "Developmental Education" in 1990. Actually UNICEF had been applying a program designed for the children of developed countries in 1960 and these programs were run by the UNICEF National Committees in related countries. In 1989 a program called "Education For Peace" was launched in Lebanon where junior high, and high school students were put in summer camps, and with the use of activities like folklore and sports they were shown the possibility of living together in peace despite their racial, religious and denominational differences. Later similar programs were run in Sri Lanka and the Philippines with similar success. The globalism which has started in the fields of industry and commerce could be spread to social, cultural and political areas, and the founding hypothesis in this approach of economic growth and development of quality of life is education.

If people around the world gain access to issues such as social justice, environmental consciousness, human rights, rights of children, health, nutrition, education, conflicts and conflict resolution, the interdependence between nations and the necessity of living together in similar conceptual approaches, it will then become possible to engage in dialogues and develop solutions for peace. In order to attain these objectives, unity in Public Education programs is called for. The elementary and middle school education programs have to be revised in accordance with the postulate which, simply stated, is the fact that today's youth are tomorrow's administrators and that they should be prepared accordingly. In order to form tolerance with divergent cultural differences and to analyze human behavior among different cultures, workshops should be organized, thus leading to areas of discussion, enabling children of different cultures to contact and understand each other.

As generally known, every April Turkey hosts the children of various countries where cultural activities are performed. International associations around the world should encourage related activities and have the same consciousness when organizing international youth meetings.

Municipalities are good resources for bringing together youth to address issues related to the environment and citizenship. If the activities are well-organized and

offered on a regular basis, then children can learn democratical behaviors at an early age; also the new generation can develop the ability to work together, help and support each other and breed ideas.

Pediatricians are people whose ideas are given importance and respect by families. They can have great influence on social, psychological and intellectual development in addition to physical development of our children. They can play an important role as educators in the augmentation of the development of constructively participating, competitive risk-taking, determined and enterprising youth. For it seems that in the twenty-first century, the conflicts will take place between people rather than nations. In an intensifying significance, the security of a person is gaining more importance than the security of nations. Since a more independent and democratic society can only be obtained through the determination and the consciousness of that society, there is a great deal of work for parents, teachers, pediatricians and administrators to do to prepare our youth accordingly.