



Don Bosco theses regarding the Post-2015 agenda

What does the Post-2015 agenda ought to provide, "in order for youth to succeed in life"?

Creating prospects for young people

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has presumed that the number of 15 to 24 year olds in the lowest developed countries will rise to 300 million in the year 2050 (168 million in 2010). All of them require upbringing, education and employment opportunities in order for them to develop some prospects in life. Particularly unprivileged children and youth need offers and support in all of these spheres to free themselves from the vicious circle of poverty, child labour and a lack of education.

Access to education

The number of children of primary school age not attending school is on a constant decline. While in the year 2000, 102 million children did not go to school, in 2011, the number decreased to 57 million. Nonetheless: Between 2008 and 2011, the number of out-of-school children decreased a lot slower: only by three million. It can be anticipated that the second millennium development goal "Achieve Universal Primary Education" will not be achieved by 2015. According to the Millennium Development Goals Report of 2013, poverty constitutes the most important single factor impeding children from attending school. Giving poor and unprivileged children the opportunity for development entails setting the familial and societal framework for school attendance: Educationally deprived families have to be convinced of the value of education for their children and school hours, costs and the like need to be adapted to real living conditions. If the school stays empty because the children have to help their parents with the harvest it will be of no help for anyone.

Universal primary education

Basic knowledge in reading, writing and calculating constitute the most crucial precondition for a life without poverty. Girls and boys, who have acquired a sound primary education, are enabled to learn a trade; they know about their rights and are able to claim them. They are aware of health risks and are more capable of independently making decisions for their future; in short: they are able to lead a self-determined life. For that reason, primary education still remains very important – also for older children who have to resume their primary education. However: Not every child enrolled in primary education will complete it – the number of early school leavers has remained high at 25 percent. Children who were enrolled late are particularly keen on dropping out of school before completing their education. Solutions include the creation of suitable offers which combine living, learning and working as well as residential projects in which youth are properly prepared for school and guided in studying and which furthermore offer youth the chance to cover the expenses for their education through their own work.

Integral education puts the people at the centre of attention

Young people are individuals with divergent preconditions and needs. A secure, non-violent environment and a childhood filled with love and enough space to play and have fun allows humans to grow into self-conscious beings. This needs to be taken into account when working with unprivileged young people. It is about education for the head, heart and hands because knowledge alone does not create opportunities for the

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future – only when coupled with social skills and values – in the spirit of the integral Don Bosco pedagogy – it enables societal participation. If education puts the human at the centre of attention, it can make a contribution to sustainable development. Integral education conveys social skills and values as well as the knowledge and the skills needed to find decent work and to take part in the cultural life of society. This includes peaceful coexistence as active citizens who are well aware of their rights and their joint responsibility for their fragile environment.

Invest into the quality of education

Following the Education for All Global Monitoring Report, produced by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 250 million children worldwide leave the primary school without being able to properly read, write or calculate. Particularly rural areas are marked by a lack of teaching materials, a shortage of qualified teachers as well as tiny and sparsely equipped class rooms. Instead of solely focusing on access to education, the Post-2015 agenda shall put at the center of attention also the quality of education.

Training creates career prospects

If education is not only limited to holding a school leaving certificate but is aligned with the factual circumstances of the labour market, it creates concrete prospects in life. This is why training is the focal point of action, either in the form of non-formal short courses or multiannual technical and vocational training. What counts is the close dovetailing of theory and practice and the practical orientation on the labour market.

Vocational training, employment and the labour market

Even the most qualified training will be in vain if people do not find a job afterwards. In order for youth to find employment the economic growth has to be oriented towards creating good employment with sustainable livelihoods. Technical and vocational training provide great chances to young people if tied with companies from the private sector and if there are offers for employment placement and the support of self employment. Networking among the training centres, exchange of staff and knowhow on the national and international level will further enhance the success of the offers.

Equal opportunities and a just distribution

Everyone owns the human right to education. Nonetheless, the worldwide gap between rich and poor gets wider and wider. Educational measures can only lay the foundation for development if all members of society have the same opportunities. This can only be realised if limits are placed on capitalism which, following Pope Francis, deprives the majority of humanity from their right to a just share in the goods of the earth. As long as the problems of the poor are not tackled at their roots by means of refraining from the absolute autonomy of the markets and financial speculation and by tackling the structural causes of unequal income distribution, the problems of the world will not be solved and in the end no single problem can be solved.

Education and gender equality

Nearly two-third of the 775 million analphabetic adults

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worldwide are women. Girls and young women need to be taken greater account of when conceptualising measures for education and training, in order to combat gender discrimination and violence against women which are deeply entrenched in various societies. There is also a need for measures which prevent that girls are married at a very young age and are taken out of school. Boys and girls alike shall receive age-appropriate information on sex education and health risks in order to avoid unwanted or early pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/Aids.

Participation of all partakers

The Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda which was co-led by UNICEF and UNESCO has put great emphasis on the participation of all partakers within the field of education, among them teachers, pupils and civil society groups. These actors shall stand in constant dialog with each other concerning questions on education and development. They shall exchange ideas on the review and analysis of progresses, on the identification of best practice approaches and the definition of new standards. This kind of participation shall be institutionalized on the local as well as the national, regional and international level.