

Geneva, 24 June 2021
47th HRC Session
Item 3 – ID with the Special Rapporteur
on the Right to education
Speaker: Maria D’Onofrio

Oral statement submitted by
IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice
And co-signed by
VIDES International – International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development

IIMA and VIDES welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur on the cultural dimensions of the right to education, to which we contributed with inputs from our local members in Spain, Uruguay, Korea, India, Democratic Republic of Congo and other 26 African countries.

As stated by the Special Rapporteur, “The right to education, understood as a vehicle for the transmission and enhancement of the cultural values of communities [...] in a spirit of universality and respect for human rights, forms the backbone of the right to development of those communities”.¹ Accordingly, the cultural dimensions of the right to education are crucial to ensuring the realization of universal, inclusive and quality education, as called for in Sustainable Development Goal 4.

IIMA and VIDES local educators stressed their growing and constant concern to put the person at the centre of the educational action, recognizing that every culture is rich in humanity, has its own dignity, and it is never self-referential (different cultures are never ‘closed universes’). However, the high number of students per class in some countries, and the excessive bureaucratization of immigration procedures in others, do not facilitate a person-centered education. Inclusive quality education aimed at improving the life of the community wherein a school operates, goes hand in hand, with the struggle to defeat the countless motivations that hold the boys and even more girls far from education.

We support the call of the Special Rapporteur to:

- 1. Recognize that cultural diversity must be both reflected and made the most of at all levels of the education system;**
- 2. Avoid using cultural diversity as a pretext for violating or limiting the scope of international human rights law.**

¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, p.5, §16, UN Doc. A/HRC/47/32, 16 April 2021.