

A Programme of Information in Italian Schools, Concerning Health and the Implementation of Primary Health Care in Somalia

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Introduction

The present paper reports the activities of the programme of education to development promoted by the International Committee for the Development of Peoples (CISP) on « Health education and nutrition: two topics for peoples' "development" », addressed in 1985-86 to almost 57,000 students of Italian schools. The programme was based on an EEC supported Primary Health Care (PHC) Project implemented by CISP in Southern Somalia.

Description of the Programme

Educational material concerning international cooperation, the health situation in Africa and Somali culture and history have been supplied to the schools. Meetings with teachers have been held in order to integrate the topics of the programme in the main curricula. Finally, lectures and group meetings using audiovisual materials were held in seventy schools. The programme has been addressed to three target groups: students, teachers and some institutions involved in international cooperation. The programme aimed at: (1) performing a baseline assessment of the student's perception of the problems of development; (2) presenting a structured set of information concerning one developing country in particular; (3) evaluating the impact of the information on the target groups. The final objective is experiencing a methodology of disseminating a « culture of cooperation » through a big mass medium, that is, school. First of all, the students' perception of development and underdevelopment was investigated by means of group discussions. Most of their attention has been focused on starvation, high infant mortality rates, the need for structures and services. The students' difficulty in setting the problems into their proper historical framework was noticed. Therefore the programme contents were conceived as mainly aimed at informing the target group of the origin and the causes of the problems discussed, as well as the possible

strategies which ought to solve them. Subsequently, seven educational units were identified and proposed to the students. The last two units specifically concerning health are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
The educational units concerning health

UNIT	SUB-UNIT	CONTENT	EDUCATIONAL TARGET	CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
6. The National PHC Plan in Somalia	The Alma Ata Declaration	Planning for health management; optimization of resources in relation to needs; role of international organizations	Awareness of the difference in the approach to health between North and South	Study of WHO documentation; study of the Alma Ata Declaration
	Social and health indicators in Somalia	Assessment of the health status by means of indicators at a country level; use of indicators in monitoring health programmes	Awareness of the need of a scientific approach to the management of health	Practical use of health indicators: personal clinical history and epidemiological records
	PHC in Somalia	Structure of the health care system; role of national and international institutions; role of local institutions	Awareness of the need of an integrated and multisectoral approach	Meeting with PHC experts; presentation of Somali PHC educational materials
7. The PHC Programme implemented by CISP in Somalia	Community diagnosis	Social, economic, cultural and environmental features of the area; people's health status	Awareness of the importance of social and cultural factors	Projection of slides concerning the project area; analysis of information about the project area
	Planning of health action	Coordination with national strategies; discussion with community leaders; establishing priorities; allocation of resources; set of timing	Awareness of the need of community participation in the planning stage	Meetings with programme staff; classroom simulations on establishing priorities
	Implementation	Dispensary; MCH service; training of CHWs and TBAs; health education; sanitation; water	Perception of the effectiveness of a good organization of work in the implementation stage	Projection of audiovisuals on the programme; analysis of programme educational materials; meetings with programme staff

Evaluation of the Response to the Programme

As a last stage of the programme, the students were asked to write a composition or make drawings, the best of which had been awarded a prize delivered by the Under-Secretary of State for the Emergency Italian Aid Fund (FAI) during a ceremony held in Rome in May 1985 attended by representatives of the FAO, the UNCHR, the Provincial Education Office of Rome, the Health Care Councilor's Office of the Province of Rome. In order to evaluate the impact of the educational messages on the students, different techniques were applied. A sample was selected of 73 works, 37 from intermediate and 36 from high schools. A two stage qualitative analysis of such works was performed. We first analyzed the content of the compositions, identifying all the statements referring to four conceptual areas: (1) historical and present responsibilities of Northern countries with regard to the South; (2) development as inter-sectoral and integrated development;

(3) health as physical, mental and social welfare and the importance of prevention; (4) training and education of staff in developing countries as a means of self-centered development. The percentage of occurrence was respectively 42.42% of the compositions of the intermediate schools and 43.24% of the compositions of the high schools (concept 1); 72.73% and 59.46% (concept 2); 51.52% and 56.76% (concept 3); 69.70% and 51.35% (concept 4). As can be seen, the most recurrent idea centers on integrated projects (concept 2). Training and education are also regarded as capital means for people's involvement in the development process. Intermediate school children seem to be more sensitive to these more modern cooperation ideas, as shown in the Fig. 1.

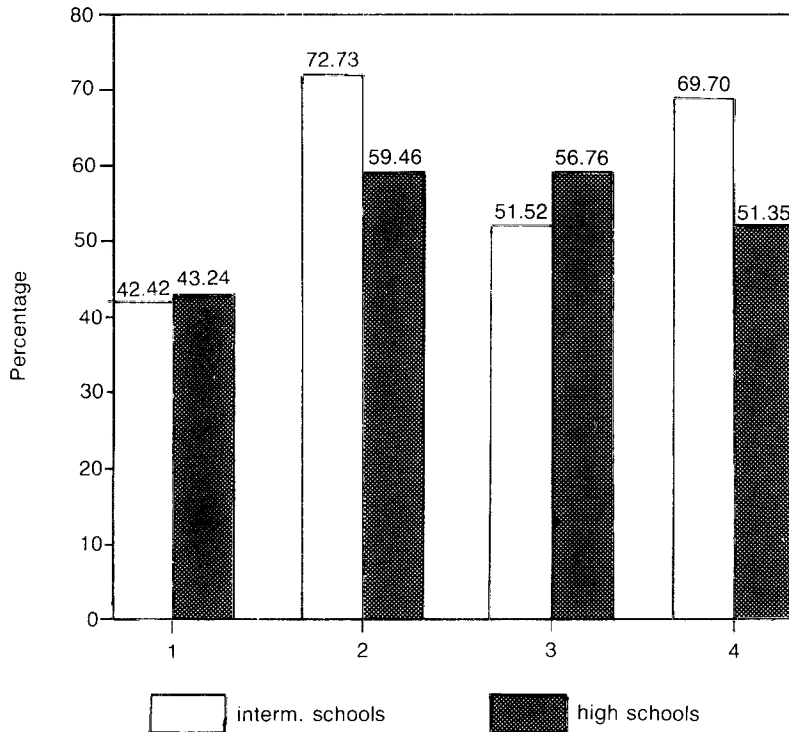


Fig. 1

As far as the image of Italian cooperation is concerned, the health and the training sectors are more frequently quoted by the students. Many subjects stressed the need to intensify the training of technicians and social practitioners in Italy so as to implement cooperation programmes in developing countries. In order to complete the qualitative analysis, a socio-linguistic analysis was also carried out. By means of a preliminary analysis of the compositions dealing with the same topic, 40 words were selected. We calculated the frequency of every such words in each composition and subsequently ranked them. Some of the words belong to what could be defined as the semantic field of cooperation; some of

the words had ambiguous connotations as they were often used in an ethnocentric context. Several keywords belonging to the semantic field of cooperation (e.g. « cooperation » rank 20; « to intervene » rank 20; « training » rank 36.5) have a lower ranking than such ambiguous terms as « underdeveloped » (rank 3 - often used with reference to « industrialized » — rank 13.5 — and implying a judgement of the « backward/advanced » type).

Also significant is the fact that terms like « progress » have been used with a positive connotation on several occasions. Its rank is 23. The terms ranked 1 to 20 are shown in Table 2. In order to test the homogeneity of the language used by the students a coefficient of dispersion (D) was applied to each of the 40 keywords, with respect to the school-class. Index D ranged between 0 and 1 according to the degree of diffusion of the word. The result obtained was highly significant in that as many as 28 keywords have an index of dispersion value exceeding a standard value which was established at 0.40.

Table 2
Rank and dispersion coefficient « D »
*Words * ranked up to 20*

Words	Rank	Dispersion Coefficient « D »
Paese	1	1.00
Fame	2	0.70
Sottosviluppato	3	0.80
Economico	4.5	0.90
Educazione	4.5	0.60
Stato	6	0.80
Sociale	7	0.80
Politico	8.5	0.50
Sviluppo	8.5	0.70
Sottosviluppo	10	0.70
Aiutare	11	0.50
Insegnare	12	0.60
Diritto	13.5	0.40
Industrializzato	13.5	0.60
Assistenza	15.5	0.40
Causare	15.5	0.50
Istruzione	17	0.50
Bisogno	20	0.70
Cooperazione	20	0.30
Guerra	20	0.40
Intervenire	20	0.60
Prevenire	20	0.50

* The correspondent terms in English are: Country, Hunger, Underdeveloped, Economic, Education, State, Social, Political, Development, Underdevelopment, To help, To teach, Right, Industrialized, Assistance, To cause, Education (synonymous), Need, Cooperation, War, To intervene, To cooperate.

Conclusions

In our views these data indicate that the efforts made by the students to express the contents of our programme ran up against a lexicon which is for many reasons inadequate insofar as it is linked to a conception of development distorted

by out-of-date models that are no longer used in international cooperation programmes, particularly in the Italian ones. The limitations of the students' lexicon point to the need for a more comprehensive dissemination programme including refresher training for the teachers involved in the activities related to the topics, the concepts and the more recent trends in international cooperation. Besides, the involvement of local institutions in developing countries in the organization of joint educational activities is envisaged, so that parallel programmes could be carried out in both cooperating countries. CISP is moving in this direction in order to implement other EEC-financed dissemination programmes in the schools.

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