



United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
Many cultures. One humanity.



First Announcement and Call for Papers

Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace & UN Alliance of Civilizations ‘Education about Religions and Beliefs’ Project

Invite you to submit a paper and take part in:

AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND EDUCATION FOR HUMAN FLOURISHING 24-26 FEBRUARY 2012 DAR MOULAY BOUBKAR, MARRAKECH, MOROCCO

The Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace (GHFP) is an international think-tank and research organisation. One of its core aims is to foster peace and harmony between people and promote inter-religious and intercultural understanding through dialogue and the deepening of individual's religious and spiritual experience.

The UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), through its Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) project, seeks to stimulate research in, disseminate best practices of, and provide a platform for, ways to educate people about differences to enable followers of diverse religions and beliefs to live together.

GHFP is a partner in the UNAOC's ERB project and is proud to convene **An International Symposium**

“RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND EDUCATION FOR HUMAN FLOURISHING”

INTRODUCTION

For a large proportion of the people in the world, spirituality is an important part of being human and often thought to be an essential element of a flourishing life. Today's world is facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities, and so there is a pressing need to educate in order to develop a deeper awareness of the spiritual dimensions of our lives.

In this context, we are interested specifically in exploring the part that religious education can play in cultivating human virtues and spirituality.

Under various names, such as ‘education about religion’, ‘faith education,’ ‘religious studies,’ and ‘religious education,’ the teaching of religious beliefs has already been integrated into the national curricula of many countries. However, the focus of religious education is generally to impart knowledge about religions, and perhaps gesture towards some inter-religious understanding. This way of approaching religious education tends to regard religion as an academic subject, and because such education is at arms-length, the spiritual and experiential aspects of religion are not made directly available to students.

The Symposium will aim to go beyond the current knowledge-centred approaches to religious education and offers a space to discuss and debate the following questions:

- **In what ways can education of/from religions better contribute to young people's spirituality and to the flourishing of their lives?**
- **How can these contributions of religions be better integrated in schooling?**

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Symposium are:

- To establish a common platform or framework for understanding the positive contributions of religions towards spirituality;
- To identify the ways in which educational systems can facilitate or nurture such spirituality;
- To examine the pedagogical implications and challenges of such education programmes;
- To identify a set of good questions for further inquiries and possible research.

METHODOLOGY & PROCESSES

Prior to the Symposium, each of the participants will write a scholarly paper to address some aspect of the main question that the Symposium aims to explore. These papers will be circulated to all the participants before the event and will serve as resources for the discussions/conversations during the Symposium.

The Symposium is envisaged to last three days. Each day, there will be plenary sessions, group discussions, and sessions of religious and spiritual practices from their own traditions, such as prayer, meditation, silence, chanting, offered by the participants. While this part of the symposium is as important as the other more intellectual parts, there will be no compulsion in participating in any of these spiritual experiences.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF PAPER ABSTRACTS

We invite scholars and practitioners from diverse traditions to submit paper abstracts and full papers in order to explore and reflect on the above question.

- Paper abstracts/proposals of no more than 500 words should be sent to Scherto Gill of the GHFP [scherto.gill@ghfp.org] and Thomas Uthup of UNAOC's ERB project [Uthup@un.org] no later than **Monday 17th October 2011**;
- Acceptance of abstract will be confirmed by **Monday 21st November 2011**;
- Final versions of papers (no more than 5,500 words including references) must be received by **Monday 23rd January 2012**.

LOGISTICS

The Guerrand-Hermès Foundation will make arrangements for lodging and board and will consider funding travel expenses for some participants, if need is documented. No honorarium will be paid to any participant.

DISSEMINATION

With the permission of the authors, the first draft of papers will be posted on the ERB website. An edited book of revised version of papers may be published.