

UNIVERSITY COOPERATION: EDUCATION AS A TOOL TO ENSURE A FUTURE OF PEACE

by Sveva Borla



The commitment of the Italian Cooperation in the field of training and education goes on, through programs of University Cooperation.

The “International Master’s on Social Sciences and Humanitarian Affairs” is now in its fourth edition. Organized in collaboration with the University of Rome La Sapienza and with the support of UNESCO, the initiative stands out among the major programs aimed at developing and promoting a culture of peace and dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian students.

Actually, we can talk about something that goes beyond a simple course of study: it is a real tool for intercultural exchange, an important brick in building a culture of peace and tolerance.

The Master comes out from the idea that education is essential: such as lime to construct a building, it plays an important role in ensuring future generations the tools and the proper sense of awareness in order to become forward-looking citizens, solid pillars of the society.

As explained by the **Director General for Italian Development Cooperation, Giampaolo Cantini**, *«The concept is very simple: investing in education means investing in peace. Learning, studying, developing a mental attitude based on critical analysis, getting accustomed to discussion and exchange of ideas while fully respecting other people’s views, are crucial steps in building a future of hope and making today’s youth the leaders of the fundamental change for tomorrow. What a fascinating challenge, at a time of turmoil, unrest and uncertainty in a region crucial to peace and security. The UNESCO Master’s at Sapienza is a cornerstone in the effort to promote education for the sake of mutual understanding and peace. It is a model to be replicated in other countries and diverse cultural contexts in the region. The regional approach is indeed a distinctive feature of Italian university cooperation within the overall framework of Italy’s commitment to peace and security».*

This commitment continues and improves with time and experience, also due to the achievements of previous editions and the positive feedback of the beneficiaries of the program.

Professor Manuel Castello, academic coordinator of the Master, explains that *«The dual aims of the fourth edition of the University Cooperation Programme are, on the one hand, to continue the academic Master with a deep understanding of the most challenging issues relating to social sciences and humanitarian affairs, by using a multicultural and multidisciplinary approach and by*



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providing students with specific periods of specialization in Rome, where they will be trained in Humanitarian Affairs and Crisis Management, International Relations and Conflict Resolution, and Education and Community Development. In Rome they live together and gradually become friends. On the other hand, the second aim is to encourage the students of previous Master's degrees to develop university cooperation through micro common projects on the field in order to offer practical solutions to the needs of both Israeli and Palestinian civil societies».



Due to an intense academic program and to the promotion of joint projects on the field, the fourth edition of the International Master in Social Sciences and Humanitarian Affairs seems to deepen the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the mechanisms that regulate regional institutions, the national and international ones. In this sense, it opens concrete professional means for young Israelis and Palestinians, formed specifically to operate in contexts as public policy and political science, environmental protection, public health, economics and humanitarian affairs.

*«To ensure the highest level proposed by the Master, the approach remains the multidisciplinary one, which characterized the earlier editions», emphasizes **Professor Massimo Caneva**, coordinator of University Cooperation of the General Directorate for Development Cooperation, who, for over ten years closely has been following the different phases of the program, fostering institutional meetings between the presidents of the Israeli and Palestinian universities. Prof. Caneva says: «It is not easy to give continuity to university cooperation programs like these. The renewed crisis, such as the recent conflict in Gaza, have put at risk the collaborative efforts between the parties. As often the Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See in Jerusalem, SE Archbishop Pietro Sambi, used to repeat to me (I still remember him with emotion after meeting him again at the Nunciature in Washington before his death), we have to trust in personal and in small steps of solidarity that are the future of peace in this region. I still remember the look of astonishment by professors of American Universities at the Italian Embassy in Washington, gathered in an Academic Seminar organized by Ambassador Giulio Terzi in November 2010, where we presented the concept of peace. Yes, peace is possible if everyone builds it personally every day with small acts of friendship and understanding of the parties, with a culture of solidarity that puts science at the service of the humankind, of every human being who seeks a future of peace. For this reason university cooperation is the new foreign policy of our country, where the university is at the service of society».*



To date, the above-mentioned Master has contributed to the formation of more than 80 graduates from the Israelis and Palestinians universities, motivating them to study in a spirit of mutual understanding. Each field of specialization is organized in order to prepare students for easy access to any workspace multinational.

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Despite the political and social situation in the Palestinian Territories remains alarming, this Master seems to be a gap in the layer of intolerance and hostility that still divides many people.

PROJECT TITLE

University Cooperation Programme
“International Master’s on Social Sciences
and Humanitarian Affairs”
(Fourth Edition)

BENEFICIARIES

Graduate students from Israeli and
Palestinian Universities, research institutes
and Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)

DURATION

1 Academic Year 2012/2013 (Fourth Edition)

IN COLLABORATION WITH

Italian Embassy in Tel Aviv
Italian Consulate General in Jerusalem

STRUCTURE OF THE MASTER’S PROGRAMME

The Master’s will be jointly coordinated by all the
participating Universities:

Palestinian universities:

Al-Quds University in Jerusalem (the students came also
from other cities of Palestine)

Israeli universities:

1. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Bersheeva
2. University of Haifa
3. Hebrew University of Jerusalem
4. Tel Aviv University

European Union universities:

Sapienza University of Rome

The Rector of the Israeli Hebrew University of Jerusalem
with the Rector of the Palestinian Al Quds University in Jerusalem
with the President of the European Parliament
and Prof Caneva
in Conference in Rome



The Ceremony of Deliver of the Master Diploma with Israeli and Palestinian Master Students
Rectorate - Academic Senate of Sapienza University of Rome