The propositions put forward by the French Minister of Education to install metal detectors and conduct student’s bag search at the schools’ entrance lead to the Observatory President’s public reaction, through an interview published on 28 May 2009 by the newspaper Le Monde. Excerpt of answers:

It is true that in France, when confronted with panic, some “solutions” such as video-surveillance or detectors are claimed indispensable. The least of preoccupations before adopting them would be to examine their efficiency. The detectors’ effectiveness in the entrance to schools has been evaluated, among others, by a survey conducted by the FBI.

Contrary to the common presumption, these detectors are present only in less than 1% of American schools (according to the annual report “Indicators on Crime Safety” in 2006). The adverse effects are well known: increase in students’ resentment, students’ contempt, eventually strengthened by bag search, and, finally, increase of antischool violence!

The systematic searches are one of the more secure ways to increase violence. As for intervention or “force” presence, of police nature or not, everything depends on its style. If it is done, for instance, by a real neighbourhood police, in connection with the schools, the residents and the youngsters themselves, then yes, there are very conclusive experiences, like in Toronto, Canada.

Each government, after a dramatic event, announces its plan against school violence.

Gilles Robien, the former Minister did it in 2006… as François Bayrou did in 1993. This notion is founded on false evidence: violence would come from outside. Therefore, we have the logic of closing a school space. Yet, like it or not, the pedagogical relationship is the heart of the problem!

The personnel recruitment system of high school teachers is a catastrophe.

It is illustrated in a situation where plenty of young educators are sent massively, little or not trained, to sensitive schools from which they only develop one idea: leave it as soon as possible.

The way our teachers are nominated is nonsense. Finally, the training for stress management, to activate group dynamics, to speak up, to work as a team has to accompany, with equal dignity, their disciplinary training. But in France the debate is so hidden by the ideology that all progress is too slow, as well as is the struggle against school violence, as if the field was determined by the “right” or the “left”. It is a pity that it has become an electoral stake.

The International Observatory also has the role to take position regarding public policies…
SCHOOL CLIMATE AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION: DISTRUST TOWARDS SCHOOL?

Alejandro Castro Santander

Over the last years, the media have undertaken responsibility to illustrate what teachers experience in schools: an evident deterioration of the relations, which translates into indiscipline and violence.

When we search for reasons we can observe that, in the eyes of children, adults appear as “masters” when it comes to transgressing norms, exercising irresponsible citizenship and the struggle with severe difficulties with problem solving - either with neighbouring countries, throughout different production sectors or at workplace and home. In short, while we are concerned about violence increase among our children and students, we still demonstrate immaturity if we decide blame adults, but not ourselves... “the other” rather.

Authority, that is to say: self-control, recognising our own limits, learning renunciation, respect towards the others – these are the keys with a help of which a child or a youngster can progress until they acquire the adult status. This authority is represented by parents at home and by teachers and school personnel. But on what level are we, educators (parents and teachers), an authority today? Which values are we transmitting to children (our own children and students), so that they can build a better society by learning from our example?

The world has changed and the family has changed. Should school change to guarantee education and ensure quality education? Schools of the 19th century, with teachers trained in the 20th century, and cyber kids of the 21st – it is a mismatch where children are the first suffer followed then by the whole society

DISTRUST TOWARDS SCHOOL?

There is an element that conditions the quality of education results but it is almost never taken into account as a quality indicator: school social climate. Those who stress importance of science, languages and mathematics, are gradually more concerned about a new conflict which escalates in childhood and youth contexts, takes place in all life aspects leading finally to violence. By coexisting with the others, one

also learns and facts prove nowadays that neither family, nor school dedicate an important space for “living well with the other”.

Studies realized in Africa and Latin America, make reference to student’s conduct problems and their “educators”, confir-

ming that latecoming, absenteeism and school desertion entails poor results. Socio-economic benefits improve the results, but the family’s involvement, the teacher-student relationship, the training with presence of values and social abilities along with discipline and norms of coexistence built in consent, have a compensatory effect that favours greater equality and influences positively school climate for teaching and learning.

It is a challenging situation and we shouldn’t neglect it, as new changes that have impact on the family and school endanger the very existence of education institutions. The fast growing of phenomenon such as “home school” is explained by the fact that parents see their children going to a school that doesn’t help develop their whole potential or where the

“Precisely because of the magnitude of changes, educational response provided has proven insufficient, because the requirement can not be made only to the education system or family. It must be undertaken by society as a whole and in a close collaboration among all social institutions”

María Jesús Comellas, 2009 (Member of the Board of Directors of the International Observatory)
we cannot be sure they will be safe and sound at school”.

CHANGING ADULTS, REFLECTING ON SCHOOL

Unfortunately, the school’s mission remains blurred because of adults’ selfishness. Each day we send those children to school and we make them sick with our behaviour and then we ask teachers to cure them. It doesn’t matter to us if they learn from our transgression and daily violence; we keep taking position as distant and critical observers and are amazed by the violence that children and youngsters commit instead of studying.

We are hypocrites with our attitude against violence when we are barely parents, mediocre teachers, absent States, and irresponsible media communicating social reality. The child is “the man’s father” and we are dangerously compromising the future of everybody.

We must say yes to school, but to a different school. A school where social climate allows the teacher to teach and the student to learn; where the student is respected for what they are. A school where the teacher feels recognized by the family, superiors and society.

The recognition should be demonstrated by the remuneration of teachers’ professional task, but also by encouraging them to keep obtaining education and by showing we trust them. Nowadays the roles have been inversed: parents tell teachers how to teach and teachers tell parents how to correct their children.

We must say yes to school where students feel that it is the place where they can develop intellectually and emotionally. A place where new generations, learning to think critically, don’t tolerate hypocrisy. A school that teaches to love the country, to work for the country, and later when these generations have their own children, they should be able to make them love the school because it’s a safe place safeguarding quality.

“...We would like to report all the bubbling ideas and projects against school violence that we feel around us, helping to advertise the work done all over the world. So, do not hesitate to contact the coordinator of newsletters: José BRITO-SOARES!

We need your news, your opinions. This publication is yours. Use this one to talk about important books, ongoing activities, researches in motion. Write about your concerns and your hopes. The newsletter is opened and it is a working tool against school violence”.

Eric DEBARBIEUX
Chairman International Observatory
The International Observatory on Violence in School is a NGO directed by a board of directors elected at the General Assembly - 25th June 2008 - Lisbon.

Alejandro Castro Santander, Univ. Católica Argentina, Argentina
Azucena Ramos Herrera, Univ. de Guadalajara, Mexico
Barbara Garcia Sanchez, Univ. Distrital, Bogota, Colombia
Benjamin Moignard, Univ. de Bordeaux, France
Carol Hayden, Univ. of Portsmouth, United Kingdom
Catherine Blaya, Univ. de Bordeaux, France
Claire Beaumont, Univ. Laval, Québec, Canada
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Laurier Fortin, Univ. of Sherbrooke, Québec, Canada
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Mitsuru Taki, National Inst. for Educational Policy Research, Japan
Phillip Slee, Flinders Univ. of South Australia, Australia
Rami Benbenishty, Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem, Israel
Ron Astor, Univ. of Southern California, Los Angeles, United States
Terry Carol Spitzer, Univ. Autonoma, Chapingo, Mexico

NB: Alphabetical Order of 22 Elected Members
International Observatory on Violence in School publishes with the UNESCO support the online International Journal on Violence and Schools. This journal is intended to attract articles of high scientific quality.

The IJVS is a blind- and peer-reviewed scientific journal founded by the International Observatory of Violence in School in 2005. Its Scientific Committee includes researchers from different disciplines and from 14 different countries. The aim is to publish articles of a very high scientific standard.

The IJVS seeks to promote progress in knowledge of an issue that is often misrepresented or manipulated in public opinion: violence in schools. Violence here is understood as being in all its forms: physical brutality and bullying, juvenile delinquency or violence perpetrated by adults. It can affect children, teenagers and members of staff alike. Those responsible may be members of the school or people from outside.

The articles will attempt to describe, list or analyse these different forms of violence by calling on a combination of approaches ranging from large-scale surveys of victimisation, for example, to ethnographic immersion methods. The international, comparatist dimension will be one of the outstanding features of the Journal.

Articles published in IJVS nº 8 (April 2009):

Pour une approche contextuelle de la violence. Le rôle du climat d’école by Carra Cécile, IUFM du Nord/Pas de Calais-Université d’Artois, CESDIP-CNRS.

Violences sportives, milieux sociaux et niveaux scolaires. Distribution “socioculturelle” des formes de violence dans le champ des pratiques sportives de terrain. by Sébastion Guilbert, Equipe de recherche en sciences sociales du sport (EA 1342), Strasbourg.

Réflexions phénoménologiques sur le sens de la violence scolaire au Chili. by Catherine Blaya, Université Victor Segalen (Bordeaux II); Eric Debarbieux, Université Victor Segalen (Bordeaux II); Luis M. Flores, Université Catholique du Chili; Ana Maria Zeron, Université Catholique du Chili.

A meta-synthesis of completed qualitative research on learners’ experience of aggression in secondary schools in South Africa. by M. Poggenpoel, Psychiatric Nursing, University of Johannesburg, South Africa; CPH Myburgh, Dpt. Educational Psychology, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Managing and handling indiscipline in schools. A research project. by Isabel Freire, Universidade de Lisboa; João Amado, Universidade de Coimbra.

For more information: www.ijvs.org
Presentation in Bogota on School Violence

The dissertation presented on 3 June 2009 by Alejandro Castro Santander from the Catholic University of Argentina was assisted by 800 members of the educational community and researchers. The presentation on “School Violence and Public Policies” presented within the Pedagogy Chair proved to be a huge success. According to Jaime Augusto Naranjo Rodríguez, sub-secretary of the Calidad y Pertinencia [Quality and Justice] Secretariat of Education in Bogota – Colombia, “the shared knowledge will, without any doubt, allow a better understanding of this phenomenon that has a great importance on defining public policies which aim for the improvement of coexistence in schools”. Alejandro Castro Santander is a member of the Administration Council of the International Observatory.

Bosnia and Herzegovina & Northern Ireland

“The Role of Education in Reconciliation: The Perspectives of Children and Young People in Bosnia and Herzegovina & Northern Ireland”

Prepared by the University of Ulster UNESCO Centre, this report highlights the important role that education can play in helping children and young people both to understand the violent past and to contribute to a shared and more peaceful future in societies emerging from conflict. In both Northern Ireland and Bosnia and Herzegovina, interviews were conducted with 24-25 years old, 16-18 years old and eleven years old. The findings from this study provide insight into the experiences and perspectives of children and young people in both regions with regard to the role of education in reconciliation.

To download the book (in English):
http://unesco.ulster.ac.uk/PDFs/ed&rec_report.pdf

Special Representative on Violence Against Children

UN Secretary-General Ban Kimoon appointed in May 2009 Marta Santos Pais (Portugal), as his Special Representative on Violence Against Children.

“This appointment was made following the recommendation included in the UN Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Children”.

The 2006 Study provided an understanding of the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of different forms of violence against children (physical, psychological, and sexual), taking into account five main settings in which violence takes place – the family, schools, care and residential institutions as well as detention facilities and prisons, in work situations, and in communities and on the streets.

Marta Santos Pais will act “to promote the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children in all regions.”
Over the last years, school violence has become one of the major educational challenges. Appearing in various forms, school violence affects many pupils, parents, and teachers around the world. Measuring the importance, knowing the causes, knowing how to prevent and how to face school violence is essential. Hence, researchers and educational actors joined the International Observatory on Violence in School.

This Observatory is a result of a network created over four world conferences: in Paris 2001, Quebec 2003, Bordeaux 2006, and Lisbon 2008. During these conferences, researchers of 52 countries from all continents decided to improve the structure of research and to fight this phenomenon by creating an observatory that has an NGO status. This network includes teachers, principals or administrators, and scientists of many disciplines: researchers in education, psychologists, sociologists, and criminologists. Its main objective is to increase both knowledge and actions by promoting and disseminating research. Our concept corresponds to joint collaborative research to warrant maximum exchange with respect to the variety of scientific approaches.

This observatory gathers researchers of both already developed or currently developing countries. It is important to think of violence in schools by considering the diversity of the phenomenon, its different variants, and its causes, like coping strategies.

**ACTIVITIES**

1 - Continue the tradition of International Conferences on Violence in School with the support of national observatories and local research labs.

2 - Publish a scientific on-line journal devoted to the topic: *International Journal on Violence and Schools* (www.ijvs.org) and disseminate regular newsletters.

3 - Create a worldwide directory of researchers working on violence in schools

4 - Award a “Thesis Prize” for the best work on the issue of violence in schools on each world conference.

5 - Take position to public statements, policies and programmes brought to its attention.

6 - On the basis of the available literature, provide an overview of efficient, ineffective or promising actions that have been suggested or realised.
The International Observatory on Violence in School is an NGO that comprises individual members and moral entities (persons). Its resources are primarily based on membership fees. The members up-to-date with payments of their annual membership fees take part and deliberate at general meetings. Thus, they define the actions and the policies of the Observatory. Moreover, they get a discount of 30 per cent on the registration fees for the world conferences or any other event organized by our NGO. They receive newsletters of the Observatory and the International Journal on Violence and Schools.

| Name: __________________________ | Frist: __________________________ |
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Confirm to subscribe to the International Observatory on Violence in School and pay the following fees:

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Membership fees have to be paid by sending a check only in Euro addressed to the International Observatory on Violence in School to the secretariat of the Observatory (see address above) or by credit transfer to the abovementioned account. Outside the Euro zone, and to avoid excessive bank charges, we advise to regroup the sending by country. It is also possible for the people outside the Euro zone to pay their membership fees at the next general meeting. Membership (subscription) will be effective only after reception of your payment.

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