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### Rethinking Education for Social Cohesion: International Case Studies. Edited by M. Shuyab

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## Review

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*Rethinking Education for Social Cohesion: International Case Studies*. Edited by M. Shuyab. Pp 254. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2012. £55.00 (hbk). ISBN 978-0-230-30026-2.

There is no doubt that maintaining social cohesion and developing resilience to conflict have been a major challenge in countries that have experienced devastating sectarian wars. This book examines the role of education in fostering social cohesion by assessing various elements such as faith schooling, citizenship education, multiculturalism and ethnic diversity.

The book is the outcome of collaboration between the Centre for Lebanese Studies and the Centre for Learning and Life Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies, and is part of a book series published by the latter (see Green and Janmaat, 2011; Green *et al.*, 2006). *Rethinking Education for Social Cohesion* consists of 15 chapters divided into two parts. The first deals with the theory of social cohesion and the design and implementation of cohesion-related policies. The second part focuses on practice-related issues and examines various means in promoting social cohesion. In the first chapter of the book, Maha Shuyab criticises cohesion theories based on economic or nationalist considerations and argues for a new paradigm based on social justice and care. Her analysis is followed by Hugh Starkey's discussion of the role of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a utopian foundation for social cohesion.

The third chapter by Dina Kiwan casts a critical eye on the citizenship education policies in England, and the following chapter by Mark Farha analyses the impact of Sectarian faith schools on cohesion in Lebanon and discusses the different attempts to break the hold of such schools on the education system. Chapters 5 and 6 consist of case studies with Lebanon as the subject. On the one hand, Mounir Abou Assali describes his experience as the head of the Centre for Research and Development in Lebanon and the challenges he faced in developing a new education system that fosters cohesion in a post-conflict society. On the other hand, Nemer Frayha, who was also the head of the Centre for Research and Development, discusses his experience in developing a national history textbook and the reasons behind the failure of the initiative.

Richard Pring contrasts faith schools and common schools in Chapter 7, and discusses how curriculum development can tackle the need for diversified schooling for different communities while providing common foundations. He relies on the example of Muslim faith schools and schools in Northern Ireland. Tony

Breslin, in Chapter 8, explores the role of civic engagement, through the concept of the citizenship-rich school, in building shared respect and identity. He argues that citizenship-rich strategies are more efficient in fostering inclusion. In Chapter 9, Maha Shuyab reports the results of an empirical study of 900 students in Grade 11 in Lebanon, while reviewing the different approaches to social cohesion implemented in this country. In the following chapter, Bassel Akar examines citizenship education in Lebanon by studying 16 private schools and interviewing 19 civic teachers and 435 students.

Lee Jerome and Andrew McCallum, in Chapter 11, tackle citizenship education while focusing on teacher training. They examine a framework for citizenship education based on children's rights and draw on feedback from student-teachers. Rocio Garcia Carrion, in Chapter 12, presents a case study of a successful school intervention for fostering social cohesion in Spain. Souraya Ali, in Chapter 13, explores the effect of school linking on enhancing understanding between ethnically-different communities and discusses whether such policies can be borrowed by post-conflict states. In Chapter 14, Alexandra Asseily focuses on the psychology of conflict and argues that, in order for social cohesion to develop, a feeling of safety is required. In last chapter, Tatiana Minkina-Milko focuses on the latest programmes developed by the Council of Europe for teaching history in conflict and post-conflict countries. She examines the methods that help teacher acquire skills needed for teaching in such areas.

In total, this book offers a broad view of the theories of social cohesion, of policy-making and of the methods used to foster cohesion. The first chapters challenge the previous definitions of social cohesion and argue in favour of new paradigms. The rest of the book deals with policy-making issues while focusing on the role of education and schools and drawing on the practical examples from Lebanon, Spain, the United Kingdom and other countries. This book represents a new addition to the growing literature on social cohesion and brings practice and theory under the same roof. The themes studied are extremely valuable as they deal with mechanisms that have wide implications for society, the economy and the well-being of individuals.

#### REFERENCES

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