

Forum on Minority Issues
Geneva 16 December 2008.

Comment during discussion on draft recommendations 6 or 7

Dear participants and organizers of forum

My name is Mats Wennerholm

I am working together with minorities in my country in order to develop better educational opportunities.

When coming to this forum I thought that we had a complex situation in my country. But listening to you all it is getting really challenging to find constructive ways of making education better for all. But I don't want to get stuck in the area of problems. I will talk to you about educational resources and teacher training possibilities that can be offered to minorities without restrictions from our respective educational, political or practical environment.

There are advantages and challenges belonging to a minority. One strong positive factor working for minorities is the development of Internet. Those who benefit most from this tool are in fact small and widely spread groups of people. Teaching materials for minorities are generally not in focus for commercial interest. So when public or other funding is available, free resources can be shared all between schools and over borders. The UN and other international bodies can encourage production and availability of resources. Internet collaboration can also contribute to develop minority teacher education and in-service training. Physical meetings for minority teachers should also be organized. If states and communities can collaborate over borders, costs will be reduced and possibilities will be multiplied. To give you just one example my government supports a multilingual educational website in 35 languages. This is a network built by teachers and coordinated by a national body in order to serve information and resources that can be reached and used in schools or at home. (www.modersmal.net) you can find more information in a folder on your way out of this forum.

During this forum some speakers have called for better educational possibilities for Roma pupils. Within the European Council a Curriculum Framework for Romani Children has been developed in consultation with the European Roma and Travellers Forum. Even after a short period of using it, our judgement is that the framework is an effective tool for guaranteeing quality in mother-tongue teaching of Romani.

Thank you