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Peace education and teacher training today in the context of yesterday: A comparative perspective between Finland, Lithuania and Sweden

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Abstract

The paper, 'Peace Education and teacher training: today in the context of yesterday', is based on findings from a comparative research project in Finland, Lithuania and Sweden. In this paper short Swedish and Lithuanian case studies are presented and some conclusions are drawn from these. In doing so, the authors deal with theoretical concepts, as well as some policies and practices of peace education in former Soviet Union and Scandinavian countries.

Key words: *peace, education, war, society*

Introduction

Peace education is closely related to other cross-disciplinary educational areas, such as education for international understanding, human rights education, multicultural/intercultural education and global education. All these educational areas are based on international treaties on human rights, and especially the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and Unesco's Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974). Peace Education has its roots in the history of peace movements of the 19th and 20th century, and up to the 1970s and 1980s it had a quite ideological and political character. The peak of peace education in Finland and Sweden, and most likely in Lithuania as well, was in the 1980s, basically due to the "Helsinki Spirit", prevailing after the European Security Conference organized in Helsinki 1975, and then the movement also became more neutral and more commonly accepted. Later on, the actual peace education has been replaced by other trends, such as human rights education. In the 1990s, the United Nations recommended that all member states should make national strategies for human rights in order to make this education more systematic. These goals and principles are included in the basic values of the school curricula for compulsory and upper secondary schools, and also specified as to their contents. Very little is, however, known, what the situation of human rights or peace education is in schools.

A problem for analysis is the conceptual jungle around peace education: it can be approached on different levels. Earlier, for instance in the 1970s and 1980s, the main emphasis was on international problems related to war, violence, poverty and injustice.

Today, focus has more and more shifted to an interpersonal and individual level, with purpose also to prevent school violence and harassment.

The major aim of the paper is to analyse and present Peace education experiences (political as well as practical) in Swedish and Lithuanian contexts.

Methodology used for gathering data:

- analyses of research literature and political documents;
- content analyses;
- interviews.

1. Case Study: Swedish Mapping of Peace Education

1.1. Conceptualisation

Ideologically, historically, and politically, at least in rhetoric speeches, Sweden has been mapped as a neutral country during nearly the whole twentieth century. After World War II until 1990 a lot of peace education activities can be classified as International understanding, Disarmament and Environmental education. After 2010 the focus has shifted to Multicultural and Conflict resolution education.

Ian Harris points out five theoretical approaches in the history of peace education. He identifies the period from 1912 as international education, human Rights education, from 1948, development education, from 1960s and environmental education, from 1980s. The fifth approach is conflict resolution education, from 1974 when Maria Montessori published her book *Education for a new world*, original work 1946, (Harris, 2004). Another researcher, Betty A Reardon, classifies in a different way. She separates education *for peace* from education *about peace*. Education for peace aims to lay the ground to require peace. In this category she includes international, multicultural and environmental education. It concerns consciousness on global issues, human differences, social and economic justice. Education about peace is based on knowledge of what peace is, human rights education, conflict resolution and traditional peace education - connected to broader peace processes (Reardon, 1999).

In this case study some activities and trends in education aimed to create a peaceful society in Sweden, a context of 'relative tranquility' (Salomon & Cairns 2010, p. 3) will be presented and some conclusions will be drawn.

1.2. Historical perspective before 1990s

In Sweden the mayor shift in the school system after World War II was the development of a democratic and equal school, 'a school for everyone'. Curricula Lgr 69 (1969) was implemented and according to this policy text teachers should speak for cooperation and warn against individuals and groups with uncontrolled power positions. The two world wars were central in the subject history and even the divided world in East and West. Questions concerning internationalism should also be treated, especially international

issues and movements that could disturb the feeling of justice. The UN and the history of this organisation, was also seen to be very important to this policy.

The next shift came in the 1980s when the state left a lot of administrative and economic matters concerning schools to the local communities. Still there was a national curricula, Lgr 80, but it was less detailed than previously. Local profile curricula were encouraged. In Lgr 80 (1980) the society was not characterised by harmony and without conflicts. There was a connection between human, social and national conflicts and aggression, violence and war. Education in school should give preparedness for peace work and deepen the understanding for international solidarity, respect for other cultures and way of living.

UNESCO has not been a gathering platform for peace education in Sweden, but its statements had a great impact when the National Board of Schools took initiatives to stimulate peace education activities (Bjerstedt 1982; 1985; Thelin 1986). To implement the idea networks were built, and in the 1980s close connections between the National Board of Schools, NGO:s such as Teachers for Peace, Teachers Education Schools and a lot of teachers in the classrooms helped to communicate the message. Interviews with teachers active in the 1980s show different experiences behind their involvement: education in Internationalism (Vilgot), solidarity with the third world (Maja), the Peace March to Paris (Viveka), resistance against NATO and the missiles in Europe (Göte) and global questions of survival (Ulla-Karin), interviews in Johansson (2010). Supporters of this network were organisations such as Save the Children and Swedish UN association, institutions like third world development institutions, SIDA, and the ministry of foreign affairs, UD (Rudvall, 2002). Instructing materials, mini-prints, research reports and many school-TV-programs on peace education were produced during this decade. A key person in Teachers Education, Malmö, was the professor in pedagogy Åke Bjerstedt. He started the project Preparedness for the future, built national and international networks. In the early 1990s he was appointed secretary of the Peace Education Committee, PEC, in the International Peace Research Association, IPRA (Bjerstedt, 1996; Andersson and Johansson, 2010).

Both the military and the right wing politicians were critical. The military worried about the willingness to defend the country among the youth, especially since the National Board of Education advocated disarmament education. The critics from the right wing focused on why social-democrats should have a direct influence in schools by promoting peace projects. On four occasions in the 1980's the labour movement launched national school competitions in writing essays on the issue of peace, using role models such as Alva Myrdal, who got the Nobel Peace prize for her work in the UN disarmament conference, and Olof Palme (School Peace project 1982-1991).

Although Peace Research studies at the universities were rather successful these were not connected to peace education in schools. Further, while the Swedish Church promoted a lot of peace debates it seems they stayed out of schools. Moreover, although an important women's peace movement arranged Peace journeys to different governments for dialogues, the gender perspective was not obvious in schools. However, these perspectives were heard in the public sphere, as well as in other occupational groups for peace, such as Doctors for Peace, Librarians for Peace, Journalists for Peace

... Popular comedians, artists, singers, and writers also produced a wide range of peace messages in the public sphere. In the late 1980s the international movement “Don’s touch my buddy”, was a very vivid and visibly campaign both in schools and in the public sphere, It was however a kind of individual political standpoint for addressing multiculturalism. At the same time environmental education in the aspect of future consciousness connected with peace education became a great issue in Sweden in the light of the accident in Chernobyl.

1.3. Policies and practices for peace education after 1990s

During the 1990s the Swedish self image of neutrality was negotiated and slowly changed. Sweden joined EU. A new curricula Lpo 94 (1994), spoke implicitly on the importance of studying international relations but focused on common values to be implemented in schools. At the same time the government opened up for free schools.

Forum of Living History, a state supported project and institution as a service for schools, on studies of Holocaust started. Its aim was also on knowledge production in values, norms and anti-discriminating. Critics on the focus of Holocaust was heard, the issue of oppression and genocide was widened and the communist system was also included, as well as, for example, Cambodia (Forum for living history).

In the new curricula Lpfö (2010) for pre-school children, teachers shall help children to work with conflicts, to sort out misunderstandings, how to compromise and respect each other. For older children and youth, curricula Lgr 11 (2011), four perspectives shall be visible in every subject: historian, environmental, ethical and international perspective. The last perspective is about solidarity, but not only in a global context but also around multiculturalism in Sweden.

Anti-discriminating laws were issued in the 2000s and strengthened to be an instrument of bullying-problems in schools. Even for Teachers for peace conflict handling became the main issue (Sveriges lärare för fred). Some conflict handling programs were offered by NGO’s as peace courses and others were consultants own courses. Social psychology-based programs, within a state perspective of peoples health (and sexual orientation) trying to build self esteem in small children as well, were developed. School subjects like Life Orientation and Life Skills Education are used in many schools today, but no national curriculum in these school subjects exists. Critics on the evidenced-based programmes are heard, for instance from an evaluation conducted by the National Board of Schools. There is a risk of creating a therapy- and confessing-culture and reproducing norms and value programmes based on correcting wrong behaviour on an individual child level and not helping children to question norms and values and develop some thinking of their own (Löf, 2011).

1.4. Conclusions

In a Swedish perspective following conclusions from the analyses above can be drawn:

1. Curricula from 1969 and 1980 seem to have an international perspective based on a collective peace project of survival while curricula from 1994 and 2011 seem to focus on an individual level of living together mostly in their own society.
2. Human rights and democracy education was not a big issue especially in peace education in Sweden but multicultural education became an issue.
3. Before 1990 networks of peoples movement and educational organisations worked together from a political left wing understanding of survival questions but after 1990 onwards a liberal market school opened to consultants and peace organizations to work with conflict handling resolutions programs.

2. Case Study: Lithuanian Mapping of Peace Education

2. 1. Conceptualisation

There are numerous and various definitions for the concepts of 'peace' and 'peace education' in research as well as in political, sociological, and cultural contexts. Lithuanian educators developed an understanding of the peace concept (Galtung, 1976) which refers to:

- nonviolence - peace with self;
- love and caring - peace with others;
- reverence for the environment and for all life - peace with nature

The concept of 'peace', developed in such a way includes values and attitudes, skills of conflict management, knowledge how to build up peaceful environment. Certainly it needs peace education which could be understood as the pedagogical efforts to create a world at peace. At the same time 'Education for peace assumes peace in education' (Haavelsrud, 2009).

Each society gives certain roles and tasks both for the educational system as a whole and for the different parts within it. Peace education in contemporary Lithuanian society derives from UNESCO strategies on peace education and its role can be described as 'to promote the development of an authentic consciousness' (*and peaceful behaviours – added by the author*) that will enable us to function as global citizens in making positive social changes. The transformational imperative must be at the centre, both in knowledge and values (Reardon, 1999). The task for peace education of young people is to teach them to become 'peacemakers' - those who 'will seek to shape their societies toward peace' (Boulding, 1962). As far as this includes knowledge, values, beliefs and skills, the important function of education cannot be underestimated.

From a sociological point of view there is always discussion: how the society is interconnected with education as an institution. From this perspective we state that peace education and development in the society is connected from both sides:

- education could be seen as a result of social developments in the society. If the society is peaceful it would help to make peace education more effective.

- at the same time, a peaceful social environment could be seen to result from peace education. Most innovative peace movements and actions are initiated and coordinated by highly educated personalities.

Contemporary societies do face some global challenges as the migration and developments of multicultural societies, extension of social exclusion and poverty, violent behaviour and crime, etc (Bauman, 2000). Sociologists (Zepa, 2000; Castells, 2010) suggest some ways to cope with them: social networking, strengthening social contacts, trust in belongings, developing the sense of communities. Education has to look for new ways to respond to these challenges as well. Some researchers suggest that peace education can be seen as a way to respond to global challenges, saying that peace as a concept, and thus peace education, cannot be separated conceptually from networking, connecting people in mutually productive, constantly interacting processes of teaching and learning.

To look more in depth into Lithuanian case of peace education a philosophical perspective on relations between 'peace' and 'education' would be of help:

- Education ABOUT Peace;
- Education FOR Peace;
- Education IN peace

2. 2. Historical Perspective

In soviet Lithuanian Republic (till 1990) peace Education policies and practices were based on philosophy like 'you wish to have a peace be prepared for the war'. Mainly it was education about peace. Actually, as the analyses of interviews showed, it was teaching about Wars much more than about Peace. Mostly heroic aspects of the wars won (names, places, other facts but not analyses of reasons, some conclusions not always true). Very often pupils got an opposite opinion on these events from family members (informant Jonas, 50). At Secondary education level (informants Daina, 55; Vilius; 52) a separate subject on military education was obligatory for girls and boys at about age 16, with the main goal for teaching this subject to prepare pupils to serve in the army at age 18. The obligatory military service lasted 2 years. For university students (informants Daina, 55; Vilius; 52) it was obligatory military course for males and certain medicine course for females. Each university or institute did have Military departments (males did receive certain military degree). After finishing university male students had to have obligatory military course for 1 year in the higher military positions. Analyses of textbooks (educational policy documents are not reachable) and responses and/or reflections of informants proved that this period could be titled as 'War Education' (Bakonis, 2000) rather than 'Peace Education'. And mostly it relates to education 'about'... with some small exceptions education 'for' peace. Whereas, Peace Education after 1990 could be seen from a social perspective as Education *for* peace and *in* Peace, rather than *about* peace.

2. 3. Policies and practices for peace education after restoration of independence

Some important political steps towards strengthening peaceful environment for the members of society as well as for strengthening educational provisions including teacher training were taken by Lithuanian politicians.

Law on Education of The Republic of Lithuania (2003) states that pupils have a right to: 'to study in a psychologically-, emotionally- and physically-safe environment based on mutual respect.....'(Article 46).

The National Education Strategy 2003–2012, adopted By Parliament, 2003, do state provisions for teacher training:

An integral teacher training and qualification upgrading system...should be oriented towards the changing role of a teacher in knowledge society, and the new competences and values that are necessary for a contemporary teacher... as a creator of learning opportunities, learning adviser, partner, mediator, creator *of peaceful environment for each student at educational institutions at different levels (interpreted by the author).*

The National Core-Curriculum Framework For Primary And Basic Education, 2008 requires that:

After completing the basic education programme, the pupil acquires the social abilities:

- respects and tolerates people of various cultures, sexes, and social and age groups;
- knows his own rights and obligations and those of others;
- perceives himself as a member of a community or society. Constructively collaborates while seeking common goals;
- *is able to manage conflicts, creates and maintains friendly relationships, is empathetic and helps others.*

Content analyses of the curriculum help us to draw some elements of the curriculum, related to peace education. Curriculum intends to develop students' understandings:

- a) of the role of citizen participation;
- b) of peaceful conflict resolution;
- c) of violence and its causes;
- d) of cooperation at national as well as at international levels;
- e) of some principles of world order, including the United Nations system;
- f) of war and its causes.

The content analyses of educational policy documents, social sciences textbooks and reflections of informants did show that peace education in contemporary Lithuanian society is based on some value based sociological ideas:

- Conflict is seen as the stick of differences (ideologies, ideas, actions, etc.);
- People are so different (different values, different interests, different views, different cultures, etc.,), so it's not possible to avoid conflicts;
- People must live together, because of one shared world;
- People have only *one way* to manage the situation – *to learn how to solve conflicts.*

In teacher training institutions as well as in school practices:

- teacher in peace education uses conceptual elements of the philosophy and the processes to structure formal, informal and 'hidden' curricula.
- peaceful environment is trying to be build up including classroom climate, tolerance, respect and those teachable moments that can transform classroom interactions and learning into peaceful way (conflict resolution, anti bullying programs, etc.)

That's why it is so important during peace education processes to use certain type of teaching/learning strategies, as for example: constructive learning; cooperative learning; participative learning; community based learning; deliberative learning; inclusive learning; reflective learning.

Most of teachers participating in the research uses example of peaceful resistance movement 'Sajudis' and some action organized by this movement, described below. The texts are often followed by videos and music from that time.

'Peaceful resistance way to Baltic Independence'

'Baltic Way' is the event which occurred on August 23, 1989 when approximately two million people joined their hands to form an over 600 kilometer (373 mile) long human chain across the three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania). It marked the 50th anniversary of August 23, 1939 when the Soviet Union and Germany in the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact divided spheres of interest in Eastern Europe which led to the occupation of these three states. Lithuania was the first of the Baltic States where the movement now known as the Singing Revolution appeared. The ancient Baltic tradition of singing folk songs became an act of political protest when the independence movement was reborn in the mid-1980s. Later, hundreds of thousands regularly gathered in public places across Lithuania and sang national songs and Catholic hymns. On June 24, 1988, the *Sajūdis*, a political and social movement to lead the independence and pro-democracy movement, was established. The national anthem of Lithuania and the traditional national Tricolore were re-legitimised in Lithuania on 18 November 1988, officially replacing the flag and the anthem of Lithuanian SSR. Five decades after Lithuania was occupied and incorporated into the Soviet Union, Lithuania became the first republic to declare its independence from the USSR on March 11, 1990, and was later followed by Latvia and Estonia. However, almost all nations in the international community, except Iceland, hesitated to recognize the restoration of Lithuania's independence until August 1991.

2.4. Conclusions

Analyses of textbooks (educational policy documents are not reachable) and responses and/or reflections of informants help us to draw some conclusions:

1. Peace education in Lithuania has very different connotation in the term of policies as well as in the terms of practices: before restoration of statehood (1999) and after. During Soviet times peace education could be title as a War Education rather than peace education. And mostly it's relates to education 'about' peace with some small exceptions education 'for peace'.

2. Peace education after 1990 could be seen from social perspective. During last decades we can observe Education *for* peace and *in* Peace, rather than *about* peace.

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