

Education for Peace: a 'trilogy' and one 'good practice'

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This paper's aim is to offer for discussion a very concise and simplified representation of the topic that gives the title to this panel "Education for Culture of Peace" within the framework of the ["PI Conf 2020 Online Education without Social Distance: Challenges for Internationalisation and Culture of Peace"](#).

In my view, three basic features should qualify "education for a culture of peace": to be proactive, multipurpose and holistic (I would call it a 'trilogy' for a culture of peace). I'll try briefly to argue each of these obviously intertwined features.

1. The proactive nature, which makes sense of an education for peace, is that peace should be believed as an ideal, to be learnt and cultivated from inside, rather than an ideology to be received from the outside.

To this regard, I always remind myself of the initial sentence of the Schuman Declaration (notoriously the founding document of the European union as a project of peace), stating that: "World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it."

What does it mean? World peace cannot be seen as an achievement, a static accomplishment that once reached, if ever, will stand for ever.

The end-of-history in a flat world where one size fits all, it has proven to be a false prophecy, an illusion. So-called globalization, which made our world ever more connected, complex and conflictual, is part of the problem, not the solution.

What I want to say is that peace is not only a United Nations affair, nor a matter only for international (public/private) organizations, national governments, political leaders, G7 and G20 and other summits of the like, but it should also be a daily concern of each of us. As Albert Einstein once said: "The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing". And it can be added a famous phrase from Nelson Mandela that says: "Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world".

Indeed, the right to education, as a fundamental human right, should precisely mean this, in regard to education for peace: providing people and in particular youth, both children and young adults, with a sense of awareness and respect, as well as with knowledge and skills about shared values, dialogue between cultures, human rights effectiveness on pair with social and environmental justice, and cultural diversity mutual respect.

A proactive "culture for peace", therefore, includes the right to education in a double way; as education for all, and as a means to develop knowledge and skills that make of peace a common concern, upon which new generations can built, if not the reality at least the hope to living in a better world, healthier and safer, for everybody. As the coronavirus pandemic shows, the war against this invisible enemy can be won by all together, not by individual countries, because either we all stay safe, or no one can be safe.

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2. This brings out the second feature, mentioned before: the multipurpose nature of an education for peace.

Indeed, peace understood not as an abstract concept but as a learning process and living exercise involving creative efforts, cannot stand but with some attribute qualifying it, in connection or in relationship with something that fills it with content and projects it towards a purpose.

By way of example: peace cannot stand but with justice, human rights, gender and racial equality, sustainable development, environmental protection, public health. And moreover, with cultural diversity, social cohesion and inclusion, cultural heritage. Above all, peace cannot stand but with human fraternity, as affirmed in the Document “*On human fraternity for world peace and living,*” signed on February 2019 at Abu Dhabi, by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar.

3. We thus come to the third feature of an education for peace, the one concerning its holistic nature.

By holism, I mean an approach according to which the knowledge of a part is better accomplished in reference to the whole to which that part belongs to.

As I said before, globalization is part of the problem, not the solution. But I have here to complete the argument, by adding that the problem is precisely how to manage the local with the global. In order to make cultural, religious and linguistic diversity a true resource for dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful relationships in the heterogeneous societies of today’s world.

Otherwise said, there are tensions between local and global, whose solutions in the name of justice, solidarity, security and peace require the balance of these seemingly opposite poles as parts of a common whole, putting them in relation to each other, so as to prevent from falling into one of two extremes: provincial localism and abstract universalism.

To this regard, worth mentioning is the passage, in the recent encyclical letter by Pope Francis (“*Fratelli tutti*”), building on and developing the message of the Abu Dhabi document, where it is stated that “social friendship” at local level and “universal fraternity” at global level are “two inseparable and equally vital poles.”

Conclusively, having in mind these three basic features of education for peace, as well as the “*right to peace*” declared by the UN General Assembly with its resolution on 19 December 2016, affirming it as an ‘individual right’ (“*Everyone has the right to enjoy peace such that all human rights are promoted and protected*”: Art. 1), further recommending on its basis the promotion of education for peace (“*International and national institutions of education for peace shall be promoted in order to strengthen among all human beings the spirit of tolerance, dialogue, cooperation and solidarity*”: Art. 3), it is to be praised, in this occasion, the Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation project on “*Culture of Peace for the Security of Future Generations*”, and the accomplishment of the “*Peace Manuals*” thereof, finalized to the elaboration of educational curricula, programs and materials, from kindergarten to elementary schools, high schools and universities, as a ‘good practice’ in the right direction towards the strengthening of the culture and spirit of peace among people.