The Impact of Peace Education in Shaping the Tolerant Behaviour of an Individual

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Abstract: The long term solution for peace is not by a consensus between two high representatives of the parties involved in the conflict, but by changing the mentality and the way of thinking of every single individual (globally speaking). And how can we do this? Through education. Why do we go to school? Why do we get educated?

First of all to LEARN. Learn how to read and write, then to learn about different things in general like science, history, culture, economics, politics, sports etc. By learning about all of that we get to KNOWLEDGE. Once we get to this step will start to better UNDERSTAND things surrounding us from different fields better and we're most likely to grow our power of understanding by accumulate constantly more knowledge.

Secondly, by going to school and getting an education we learn how to communicate with others, we learn how to accept the others, we learn how to overcome different problems and fears, we learn the importance of respect – respect for the others and for the society and its rules in general, we learn about consequences, we learn how to find solutions.

By doing all that, an important step and factor of peace will become more accessible to us: TOLERANCE. And this is the key factor for a real, durable and global PEACE.

Keywords: peace, education, tolerance, communication, learning

1. Understanding the idea of a conflict

In this paper we'll try to present you with a theory we think it's the closest to a viable solution for transferring peace from written and spoken idea to a real fact.

Let's take the classic example of **A** being in conflict with **B**. To prevent the conflict or to put an end to it, we should first learn how it aroused it. And its roots should be looking as far as possible in the history of the two principal actors, even in times when no sign of a conflict where obvious.

Secondly, before inviting A **& B** to sit and talk, we should learn about each other history, culture, religion, traditions, economics, and politics. All this creates a human being, just like the molecules and the organs and so on creates our bodies. And human beings are the ones that create the nations, countries, organizations – the principal components in a conflict. And note that learn about all this should mean know it as they were our owns.

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After we make sure we have a picture as complete as possible, we must assure **A** knows all that about **B** and the other way around too.

Now let's take a look to the main reasons **A** and **B** may be in a conflict for: Economically, Geographical, Social, Religious, Political, Ethnical, Emotional and so on.[1]

But all of these reasons are just main causes, a general classification, each of it having many other components.[2] For instance, the Economical factor may be referring to: poverty, natural resources (either lack or abundances of it), developing specific branches during conflicts; Geographical: territorial issues, border issues, natural resources; Social: population number,, resources (human resources, land, natural resources, things), power and political control, emotional needs—fear, respect, recognition, friendship, love, values and beliefs, history. We also have to see if it is an internal conflict—a conflict with oneself, an interpersonal conflict—a conflict between two or more people, an intergroup conflict—a conflict between two or more groups, an intragroup conflict—a conflict within a group, an international conflict—a conflict among two or more nations, a global conflict—a conflict that affects many people and all nations in the world and also besides of the people who are directly involved in the conflict, who has a stake in the outcome. [3] Also, it is important to know the impact of prior efforts to manage the conflict.

But even if a certain conflict between **A** and **B** may be for the time being resolved through talks and through paper, how do we prevent it from a new development? The long term solution for peace is not by a consensus between two high representatives of the parties involved in the conflict, but by changing the mentality and the way of thinking of every single individual (globally speaking). And how can we do this? The answer is by education. It's not a simple thing to do; it's not something we can achieve fast. It will probably take years, but isn't it everything good and durable achieved through hard work and patience?

2. The necessity of Education

Why do we go to school? Why do we get educated? [4]

First of all to LEARN. Learn how to read and write, then to learn about different things in general like science, history, culture, economics, politics, sports etc. By learning about all of that we get to KNOWLEDGE. Once we get to this step will start to better UNDERSTAND things surrounding us from different fields better and we're most likely to grow our power of understanding by accumulate constantly more knowledge.

Secondly, by going to school and getting an education we learn how to communicate with others, we learn how to accept the others, we learn how to overcome different problems and fears, we learn the importance of respect – respect for the others and for the society and its rules in general, we learn about consequences, we learn how to find solutions.

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But, most importantly, by education, an individual learn how to think for him and not to believe without questioning what someone tells him. So, before jumping to a conflict he is called for, he might get the time to think if it is worth it.

An educated individual will show “positive attitudes towards diversity and equal opportunities, such as on race and gender equality issues” and also “with their higher levels of skill, are a source of wider innovation and economic growth”. [5]

3. The Key Factor for Peace

By doing all that, an important step and factor of peace will become more accessible to us: TOLERANCE. And this is the key factor for a real, durable and global PEACE.

On a simple view, this road for peace could be resumed like in the next pyramid: at the bottom is learning, then knowledge, understanding, tolerance and on the top we reach peace.

“Tolerance is the practice of deliberately allowing or permitting a thing of which one disapproves. One can meaningfully speak of tolerating, only if one is in a position to disallow."[6] But in order to be tolerant, we need to know and understand the others.

Besides the normal learning process that someone gets in school, we should also put an accent on learning how to teach about what matters to others, a so called “multi-level approach” that would be based on cross-cutting themes, across all levels, from intra-personal to international, including the role of donors and religious leadership”. [7]

Programs leading this way are trying to be created in different areas with conflicts. For instance, in Middle East, many international organizations and non-governmental organizations are conducting programs to familiarize Palestinians and Israelis with each other’s culture and history.[8]

Of course is not an easy thing to do. And this is because on one side we have a lock of access to education in its complete sense, with the multi/level approach program. This is why, the reports that analyses the uphold of the international standards set by UNESCO, shows that while Israeli “textbooks include many references to the narrative of the other, to the recognition of the peace process, to the promotion of peace as a central value and to the presentation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as one that will be resolved in a peaceful manner.” [9], the Palestinians have a “lack of education for peace and tolerance” [10]

If we compare the Global Peace Index on 2013 [11] and the 2013 Education for All Global Monitoring Report Teaching and Learning for Development [12] we will see that the countries with the highest score on state of peace are the ones that have the most developed educational strategy and where the access to education is the highest.

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Besides the creation of such programs that should lead to tolerance and in the end to peace, there are many factors to take into consideration. One of great importance is the financially aspect. As much as we like to think that education is a free right, even in countries like Romania, it takes money to get through the free programs of education. So, yes, it would be a big financially effort from individuals, countries and international community to get to a globally free access to education. As showed in the Global Higher Education Rankings 2010, "everywhere around the world, cultural capital plays a key role in access to education"[13]

4. Conclusions

The Peace Pyramid is a formula that should be implemented all over the world. In order to do that every single people should be able to follow the next steps – and these steps should become as vital as air and food.

1. Find your inner peace
2. Understand yourself
3. Forgive yourself and give yourself a second chance
4. Respect yourself
5. Love everything around you
6. Make peace with people around you
7. Understand everyone around you
8. Forgive people around you and give them a second chance
9. Respect everyone around you
10. Accept and respect the culture you do not understand
11. Do not destroy, but build
12. If someone makes you cry, make him smile
13. Think positive
14. Have faith
15. Help others
16. Choose to love not to hate
17. Treat the others the way you want to be treated it.

So what should the International Community and Local Governments do, besides trying to overcome poverty in different regions of the world, save the nature, grow the economy? It should make massive investments in education. Building schools and creating educational programs will also help quickly and better resolving the other issues on their agenda. Of course it is not an easy thing to do, and its results may not be visible until after a few generations, but "we should be the change we want to see in the world" and we should be the generation that thinks to the future and not to the personal present.

And what should we do as individuals? Live every day following the 17 steps and trying to shape ourselves and the others into having a tolerant attitude. Tolarance should be part of who we are. Everything we do should be based on tolerance thinking and behavior.. A hard way of living, considering it's in our

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nature to first think of ourselves, to try to preserve and improve our own lives, almost impossible rules to follow when so often we are burden with our daily problems. But as hard as it is, we must realize that hate and violence will never bring anything good or constructive to our lives. It's natural to want ALL, BEST, MORE for ourselves, but while we live in a society, and while we are not alone on Earth, we must realize that ALL, BEST and MORE for everyone is a Better way of getting it for ourselves too.

But the most important thing remains probably, the fact that we should really want to achieve Peace, really want it to become a reality, because if we only wish it on paper, if we treat it like an excellent trade mark, Peace will never become a *reality*, it will always remain a *utopia*.

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