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Teaching Peace – The Need for Teacher Training in Poland to Promote Peace

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peace education, conflict resolving, teacher training, teacher education, multicultural understanding

Education is a key issue in building world peace. Men are increasingly aware that peace is a great value. Peace can create conditions for better cooperation and development, both individuals and states in many areas of life. In the era of globalization the search for lasting values is becoming a challenge and brings responsibility. In the process of building a common Europe and globalization, the task of reinforcing educational activities to prepare young people to build peace is gaining importance. The importance of education for development and strengthening of stable, peaceful and democratic societies today takes on a new dimension.

Now at the beginning of the 21st century people on Earth are plagued with various tensions and disputes. We face many problems, where the most dangerous, the most fateful and most painful for the people seems to be armed conflict. This statement assumes significance in the modern era of mass destruction, nuclear weapons, where the international community has no other choice but peaceful coexistence. The development of mankind, the fate of civilization, but also the human biological survival is dependent on strengthening and safeguarding peace in the world. The Earth is a planet, at the same time, there is the home for six billion people and there is no other place for them to live. Only through understanding, dialogue, respect and tolerance for each other we live together, despite the differences that divide us, such as physical appearance, religion, customs and culture.

Education is a general process by which people gain knowledge about the world, about other people, by modifying their own behavior. Education has to prepare men for life, so that it would be easier for them to realize their aims in accordance with their own values. Educational aims are to improve the quality of life of the individual and group. Changes occurring in the world, put great demands on humanity and education gives the chance to face the challenges of the 21st century.

At all levels of social intercourse our co-existence is defined by conflict situations. The aim of peace education is to develop such interactions, which is largely free from violence. The future of the world depends on an effective defense of peace and equitable implementation of the new economic order. However, the future also depends on education which relates to the hopes of our time known as the era of civilization which is at a crossroad. Bogdan Suchodolski, Polish philosopher, educationalist, professor of pedagogy, pointed over 30 years ago that education allows among other things the understanding the nature and development of tendencies of modern civilization, and guides its development. Traditional approaches to the teaching in traditional institutions, as well as its curriculums with the essential tasks are not sufficient. The source for an action plan for peace education, according to B. Suchodolski, is in the education for dialogue, reconciliation, coexistence. Education for peace should be manifested in the aspiration to create world where every nation has got the right to happiness and full development¹.

This article is an attempt to present the issue of education for peace as an obligation and task for better multicultural understanding around the world, despite the disagreements and conflicts between individuals and groups. Working on this paper, I did not want to construct any teacher programmes nor to describe all guidelines from existing teaching manuals focusing on peace education. The aim of the paper is to stimulate the discussion on peace education and the need of teacher training for peace and multicultural understanding.

Approaches to peace

The meaning of peace has changed over centuries. Already in the era of Enlightenment within philosophy there were formulated first theories about the value of peace and its meaning for human development. The idea of peace has not been defended only throughout the culture of war but an understanding that peace is inter-linked with such conditions as good laws, justice, equality, tolerance and solidarity.

The most famous ideas in the philosophy from Renaissance to the 20th century were among others the ideas of Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Bentham, Herder, Kant, Rousseau, Toynbee, Russell, Jaspers and many others in different countries around the world.

Peace as a spiritual and moral value has got its origin within the Old and the New Testament. The Old Testament gives a vision of peace - both in the sense of the immense

¹ Suchodolski B. (1985), *Przygotowanie do życia w pokoju*. „Biuletyn PTP” Nr. 3-4, p. 63.

value of peace but also a clear sense of how peace is achieved and the from it takes. In Hebrew, the word *shalom* can be understood depending on the context. It can referred to an individual as “integrity, lack of pettiness and possession of one’s own attributes”, “health and condition of well-being”. If *shalom* refers to life in society, it refers at the same time to an order free from dissension or disputes. Therefore on one hand, it concerns internal peace considered as an attribute of the human being. On the other hand, *shalom* means peaceful relation between groups. Peace is a central point of the Old Testament, where peace is inextricably linked to justice and righteousness. There is no peace where justice is ignored. The Old Testament therefore knows that human warfare is dangerous because it is often an expression of human cruelty and injustice.

In the New Testament peace was understood as a notion which is an opposition to *Pax Romana* and *shalom*. *Pax Romana* was the long period of relative peace and minimal expansion by military force. These notion was understood as an imperial wish, and *shalom* as a result of man’s submission to the authority of God. The New Testament presents peace as way of life, i.e. merciful love and justice among individuals regardless of their race, religion, origin, etc. The New Testament does not glorify war but exalts peace. This concept is in a opposition to war with emphasis on the harmony of interpersonal relations.

Values such as freedom, love, justice, and the pursuit of peace, were once dominant in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It means that peace is essential for Judeo – Christian tradition where the notion of peace itself is additionally enriched with practice, especially in the 21st century after two World Wars.

International efforts in the field of promotion of peace – activity of UNESCO and UNICEF

The essence and importance of education for peace in Europe after World War II, stressed among other international organizations especially UNICEF and UNESCO. They created peace education as one of their central goals in their activity on a international level.

UNICEF describes peace education as “*schooling and other educational initiatives that:*

- *Function as “zones of peace”’, where children are safe from violent conflict*
- *Develop a climate that models peaceful and respectful behavior among all members of the learning community*
- *Draw on the knowledge of peace-building that exists in the community, including means of*

dealing with conflict that are effective, non-violent, and rooted in the local culture

- *Handle conflicts in ways that respect the rights and dignity of all involved*
- *Integrate an understanding of peace, human rights, social justice and global issues throughout the curriculum whenever possible*
- *Provide a forum for the explicit discussion of values of peace and social justice*
- *Use teaching and learning methods that stress participation, problem-solving and respect for differences*
- *Enable children to put peace-making into practice in the educational setting as well as in the wider community*
- *Generate opportunities for continuous reflection and professional development of all educators in relation to issues of peace, justice and rights*².

Through many years of UNESCO functioning, the organization created a notion "culture of peace". That means "a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations"³. According to UNESCO constitution from the year 1945 "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." The goal of UNESCO's education programmes and partnerships is the development of comprehensive systems of education that embrace the values of human rights, intercultural understanding and tolerance. Education for peace and non-violence promotes the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire these values. UNESCO's programme for peace provides knowledge about a culture of peace, as well as imparts the skills and attitudes necessary to defuse and recognize potential conflicts and those needed to actively promote. Organisation formulated a lot of different objectives of peace education, which may include understanding of the manifestations of violence, the development of capacities to respond constructively to that violence and specific knowledge of alternatives to violence. There are two fundamental concepts of UNICEF's peace education: respect and skills. Respect refers to the development of respect for self and for others; skills refer to specific communication, cooperation and behavioral skills used in conflict situations.

² Fountain S. (1999), *Peace education in UNICEF*, New York, p. 5-6.

³ *UN Resolution Culture of Peace A/RES/52/13* [online], New York [data dostępu: 2013.02.14] p. 1, dostępny w Internecie: http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/kits/res52-13_en.htm.

Educational reports about peace education

The importance of peace education was stressed over last 30 years in different reports about education. One of the first reports which indirectly refers to peace education was the report of Edgar Faure “Learning to be. The World of education today and tomorrow” (1972). Four years later the Club of Rome published its Third Report (1976) entitled “Reshaping the International Order”. The report coordinated by Nobel Laureate Jan Tinbergen points out to the recommendations for new international order, the urgent need of today’s population and the probable needs of future generations. Both formal and informal education has got a new challenge in creating of a new world which can only be built through solidarity of the world’s people and the participation of the masses. “*The development of global awareness is a prerequisite to the peaceful creation of a new world order. It can even be said that the cultural and educational upgrading which global awareness implies, entails – or is equal to – the new order*”⁴.

After the publishing of Faure’ Report and 17 years after publication of the Third Report of the Club of Rome a lot of has changed within the world and education. Changes cause the need to create a new proposal that determines the direction for education in the 21st century. As answer to this need Jacques Delors in the UNESCO report “Learning: the treasure within”⁵ showed new multi-dimensional education. The whole report is build on the four Pillars of education: “Learning to know”, “Learning to do”, “Learning to live together, learning to live with others” and “Learning to be”. All these pillars (dimensions) are important and necessary for education, which has got new mission and tasks for the future. The pillar “Learning to live together, learning to live with others” refers in particular to the education for peace and non-violence teaching. Because violence all too often dominates life in the contemporary world and there was the extraordinary potential for self-destruction created by humans in the 20th century. That is why this pillar calls for education to avoid conflict or to peacefully resolve conflict. However the idea of teaching non-violence in schools is certainly praiseworthy, it is a difficult issue since people have a natural tendency to overestimate their own abilities or those of the group to which they belong and to entertain prejudices against other people. It means education has got several tasks in regard to teaching about human

⁴ Tinbergen, J. (1976), *The Third Report of the Club of Rome. Reshaping the International Order*, New York, p. 77.

⁵ Delors, J. (1996), *Learning: the treasure within. UNESCO report*, Paris.

diversity, and to instill awareness of the similarities and interdependence of all people. From early childhood, the school should develop the empathy, ability to face up to the inevitable tensions between individuals, groups and nations, support recognition of the rights of other people and openness to them.

The Delors Report focused in one of the chapters entitled “Teachers: in search of new perspectives” on the issue that quality of education should first improve the recruitment, training, social status and working conditions of their teachers and encourage teacher participation in policy decision-making. The authors stresses the imperative requirement to update knowledge and skills. *“Their professional lives should be so arranged as to accommodate the opportunity, or even the obligation, for them to become more proficient in their art and to benefit from periods of experience in various spheres of economic, social and cultural life”*⁶. Besides this the Report stresses the importance of exchanges of teachers and partnerships between institutions in different countries. Exchanges like this provide an essential additional value not only for the quality of education but also for a greater receptivity to other cultures, civilizations and experiences.

The need of teacher training for peace education

According to OECD report from 2008, tertiary education policy is increasingly important on national agendas, as well as it is perceived as an important factor in social and economic development. *“The widespread recognition that tertiary education is a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy has made high-quality tertiary education more important than ever before. The imperative for countries is to raise higher-level employment skills, to sustain a globally competitive research base and to improve knowledge dissemination to the benefit of society”*⁷.

Increasing globalization, migration, poverty and conflicts have got an impact on teacher education. In most of the west European countries within a classroom a multitude of spoken languages, religious and cultural understandings must be considered when teaching. European teachers have to have a understanding and knowledge what appears to be right for all students, even for students from other countries that have different cultural values and

⁶ Tamže, s. 147

⁷ Santiago P., Tremblay K., Basri E., Arnal E., OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education - Synthesis Report 2008 [online] Paris [dostęp 2013.02.10], s. 2, dostępny w Internecie: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/20/4/40345176.pdf>.

different understandings of the values. This has brought the majority to the conclusions that there is a need for a substantial shift in teacher attitudes within the teachers education programs offered by universities and centres for teacher training.

There is still a small percentage of immigrant's children in Polish schools compared to the countries of West Europe. That might be the reason that in Poland in recent years teacher trainings programs did not consider intercultural knowledge and skills for teachers-to-be. There is a hope to improve this situation. The Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education has implemented a plan of teacher education programmes. The plan takes the form of learning outcomes when defining and describing qualifications for graduates. In my opinion, new learning outcomes at the universities should be focused not only on vocational education and training. At the same time they should focus on general skills to prepare for challenges of the 21st century like globalization, migration, global security and peace building. Learning outcomes at universities should be the continuation of learning outcomes from secondary schools.

Nowadays through common obligatory core school curriculum all schools in Poland could promote and carry out the goals of peace education and this might become more efficient way of supporting measures of the action.

Additional to school curriculum, to promote peace education, also teacher training would be very useful. In the whole world there are many initiatives by different organizations related to peace education, like for example teacher trainings. UNICEF in one of their publications suggests some basic tips how such training should be created. The paper recommends training with focus on skills on the use of interactive and participatory teaching methods, organising cooperative group work, and facilitating group discussions. *“The use of these types of teaching methods is essential to quality basic education, and enables teachers to convey values of cooperation, respect for the opinions of the child, and appreciation of differences. Participatory teaching and learning strategies can be used throughout the curriculum, and are an essential component of efforts to promote peace through education”*⁸. UNICEF is suggesting the pre-service and in-service teacher education which should focus on participatory teaching and learning methods, as well as on content areas such as children's rights or conflict resolution skills.

UNESCO published 2005 the Teacher Training Manual level 1 – 3 for trainers of teachers. The implementation structure of the document is based on the experience acquired

⁸ Fountain S. (1999), *Peace education in UNICEF*, New York, p. 19-20.

over the eight years since the programme has been in use. The programme has been evaluated by external experts. The new revised materials incorporate both the suggestions made in the evaluation and the feedback from the specialists who implemented it in schools.

In recent years a number of projects and suggestions for teacher training in the field of peace education have been developed around the world. The ideas are focused on peace education usually suggesting changes in the school curriculum, own peace education programme, accompanying with teacher in-service / pre-service training. In the '90 years of 20th century research work related to peace education have been led by Ake Bjerstedt from Lund University in Malmo. Educators at the Malmo School have carried out a series of studies within the area of school and peace and published a lot of reports about the possible ways of dealing with conflict and peace education. As an informal umbrella term for the project group conducting such studies, the term "Preparedness for peace" has been used. Their papers concerned among other issues curriculum analysis, teacher education, educational planning – all this related to peace education and "preparedness for peace".

All the mentioned above teacher manuals and suggestions for teacher training unites one idea. If peace education should be more significant and more effective, than peace issue should be part of school curriculum. Additional teachers must be prepared to teach issues that are often socially uncomfortable and conflicting in order to combat the stigma, conflict and inequality that peace education seeks to diminish. If teachers do not get acquainted with peace education possibilities and procedures in their training, it is not possible to expect them to do a good job as peace educators.

The essential element in the whole educational process are teachers. That is why I see the need for teachers being prepared to educate pupils about peace and values such as tolerance, justice, solidarity, responsibility at the institutions (in Poland mostly at the universities) where teacher education is carried out. Teachers should be ready to develop skills for negotiation, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, conflict resolving without resorting to violence. In my opinion, it calls for efforts to appeal to the teachers to undertake the effort to teach about peace and for peace. In the long term these institutions could create something like a cooperation network to develop and improve the teachers manuals for peace education, access to curricular resources, services to schools, support exchange of information and ideas between teachers.

With multidimensional tensions from which the 20th century suffered, peace education has got a task to prepare teachers to discharge their duties and responsibilities in upholding and strengthening the positive vision of peace education in the 21st century.

Already mentioned Delor's report, the role of the teacher as a peace builder required re-identification in right earnest. The educational skills and strategies should be organized and oriented in the way that they bring about a positive result in replacing rudeness and violence committed either by the teacher or by the learner in terms of maintenance of "discipline" or punishment respectively inside the classroom. Training of teachers for promotion of education for peace is a very challenging task. The role of teacher depends on their innovative theoretical and practical suggestions. Further importance is teacher's devotion to the challenges like violence, indiscipline, conflicts, superstitions, misunderstandings. Teachers who are promoting peace in their schools should have a task to promote sympathy, togetherness, friendship and involve themselves in real life situations where peace has been disturbed. In this practical situations, and not only in theoretical activities, where peaceful relations have been interrupted, participation of teachers together with students is essential. It gives more satisfactory outcome than simply dealing with theories inside the classrooms.

Another component associated with peace education is self-awareness of pupils. Very often students in a classroom are working more or less mechanically. When asked they answer or discussing what others are saying or what they just wrote in their school book about the topic. This proves that there is a vulnerability of being overpowered with a routine work in learning or exercising a lesson on peace education which can hardly avert failures. There is usually a tendency on the part of the learner to fall easy prey to commonality in following lessons about peace. Passivity and dullness are the two negative components that stand very often in the way of how to transform education for peace into real life situation.

Conclusions

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from the discussion about the need of teacher training for peace education. Firstly a brief overview of printed resources shows that there are different understandings of peace education, however there is a common view. Peace education is a set of obligations & tasks for a better multicultural understanding around the world, despite the disagreements and conflicts between individuals and groups. The second conclusion of the paper is that the teacher training in Poland doesn't contain a strong element of peace education, while some educational reports underline the need to include this issue in the teacher training programmes. Objectives of such training might aim to encourage teachers to take on their own responsibilities in upholding and strengthening the positive vision of peace. Some good practices regarding teacher training manuals can be found in UNESCO resources, they are the first of many which are design to promote the

culture of peace. The conditions of peace can create better cooperation and development, in both individuals and states in many areas of life. In the multicultural world the search for lasting values is becoming a challenge and brings greater responsibility. The task of reinforcing educational activities to prepare young people to build peace is gaining importance.

Keywords:

peace education, conflict resolving, teacher training, teacher education, multicultural understanding

Abstract:

The aim of the paper is to stimulate the discussion on peace education and the need of teacher training for peace and multicultural understanding.

This paper is organized in two sections: the first section presents the importance of peace education for Europe in the Twenty-first century. This section discusses peace as a spiritual and moral values, European achievements for peace in the field of philosophy as well as educational reports focused on peace education. The second section seeks the importance of teacher training for peace education, the possibilities of including of peace topic into in-service teacher education.