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From Human Education in the 3rd Millennium

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III. Being human

16) Valuing peace (Does education teach through hidden curriculum, etc. peace or warlike attitudes, negative perception of others, violence and its base, which are injustice, exclusion, etc.? How can education realistically advance peace, global cooperation, and respect for human rights in the face of conflict, exclusion, competing national interests?)

PEACE

Violence, Alterity, Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

The starting point for my reflections is the conviction that the heritage of the world denotes both tangible and intangible goods that are important to individuals, to communities, and to humanity, and that have intergenerational significance. The heritage has its origins in the past but is distinguished by its importance for the present and the future. According to an old picture we are all dwarfs on the shoulders of giants. Our life and development opportunities are based on the achievements of earlier generations. For each generation, it is important to shape both natural and cultural heritage, to understand it in its mutual entanglement and to make it fruitful for future generations.

It has long been clear that the negative effects of modernization are threatening life on the planet. Central to the shaping of the world in the Anthropocene is the realization that peace is a term that encompasses many areas. Its meaning begins with the preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO: "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed" It reaches as far as approaches to critical peace research and peace education, which seeks to see and overcome the origins of war and violence in social structures. To create peace, the following conditions are required (Senghaas): the anchoring of the monopoly of power at the state; rule of law; participation; conflict culture; social justice; emotional control. The goal is the realization of the following values: human dignity, nonviolence, solidarity, moral courage, readiness for dialogue, sustainability, development of democracy.

It has long been clear that the negative effects of modernization are threatening life on the planet. If one looks at these threats, which are discussed under the term of the Anthropocene, comprehensive effects on democracy and education are evident. Education for peace plays a central role in the development of a culture of peace. Today, it focuses on the following three interlinked areas, which concern a constructive approach to violence and social justice based on human rights, diversity and sustainable development.

(ad 1)

In the analysis of **violence** and the treatment of questions of social justice, education for peace draws on several decades of intensive education for peace.

(ad 2)

In dealing with **diversity** and **alterity**, education for peace builds upon experiences in the field of intercultural and transcultural education, which have gained considerable importance in the context of globalisation for more than two decades.

(ad 3)

In view of the growing demand for increasingly scarce resources and the associated problem of intergenerational justice, **sustainable development** is becoming increasingly important as a reference point for work on education for peace.

Ad 1 Violence

Education for peace must continue to draw back on key concepts such as "organised peacelessness", "structural violence" and "social justice", as developed by peace research in the 1960s and 1970s (Galtung, Senghaas). These ideas make the social character of peace clear and protect against omnipotence fantasies and naive problem reductions. According to Galtung's still valid distinction, peace is not only understood as the absence of war and direct violence (negative concept of peace); peace must also be understood as a reduction of structural violence, which is concerned with the creation of social justice (positive concept of peace). Based on such an understanding of peace, not only war or the direct violence between nations and ethnic groups become the object of education, but also the violent internal social living conditions.

Education for peace requires certain forms of education to promote the development of non-violent learning processes. Therefore, it will develop forms of learning in which participatory and self-initiated learning takes place. In these learning processes, a large part of the initiative and responsibility should lie with the addressees of education for peace. They are encouraged to develop their peace-relevant imagination. The development of a historical consciousness about the origin and principled changeability of conflict formations plays a decisive role in this process. This awareness contributes to the development and processing of real-utopian designs for the change of the world. At the same time, it ensures a future orientation in the consideration of the problems.

Ad 2 Diversity and Alterity

To the extent that differences between people, cultures and societies often lead to the emergence of violence, education for a peaceful treatment of cultural diversity is an important task of education for peace. In the context of globalization, two opposing developments can be distinguished today. One aims at standardization; the other emphasizes the diversity and multiplicity of biological and cultural developments as well as the necessity and inevitability of difference and alterity.

Societies and people thus constitute themselves in the confrontation with alterity. The experience of other people and cultures already plays a central role in the educational processes of children and young people. Only in the mirror and in the reactions of other people and cultures can people understand themselves. This implies that self-knowledge presupposes the understanding of the lack of understanding of alterity.

How can we succeed in allowing the experiences of the alterity of other people and cultures to take place without setting in motion mechanisms that reduce them to what is already known and familiar? There are several answers to this question. Depending on the context, they will vary. One way to endure the alterity of foreign people is to experience the feeling of strangeness with oneself, i. e. to experience how one can be surprised by one's feelings and actions. Such events can contribute to increasing flexibility and curiosity about the diversity of other people and cultures.

One's own experience of being alien is an important prerequisite for understanding and dealing with alterity. It forms a basis for the development of the ability to perceive and think from the viewpoint of others, i.e. a heterologous way of thinking in which dealing with the non-identical is of central importance. From such experiences, an increase in sensitivity and the willingness to expose oneself to new and unknown things can be expected. The result is a gradual increase in the ability to cope with complex situations emotionally and mentally and not to act in them in a stereotypical manner.

Sustainable Development Goals and education for sustainability

In autumn 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted 17 goals for sustainable development in New York. The objectives of this 2030 Agenda fall into five areas: **"people"** (poverty and hunger, dignity, equality, healthy environment), **"planet"** (protection of ecosystems), **"peace"** (inclusion, peace, justice), " **prosperity** " (well-being of all people through economic and technical development)," **cooperation** ". The realization of these tasks should be based on the principles of universality, indivisibility, inclusion, accountability, partnership. The development of this Action Program 2030 is an expression of the worldwide concern of humanity for its future.

The most important area for implementing this action program is education. The goal here is **inclusive, equal, high quality and lifelong education**. The program is based on a humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity, social justice, security, cultural diversity and shared responsibility. Education is understood as a "common good" and fundamental human right; their realization is necessary to enable peace, human achievement and sustainable development (UNESCO).

The Declaration and Action Program recommend the development of a 12-year public school system. Compulsory education with free and quality teaching should be nine years and include primary and lower secondary education. It also recommends the establishment of at least one year of free compulsory pre-primary education. Education should be inclusive and equitable. Including here not only the inclusion of children with disabilities, but also the rejection and combat of all forms of exclusion and marginalization.

Conclusion

The goal of peace culture and peace education is the reduction of human violence against nature, other people and one's own person. It is important to understand nature as a world of co-existence and to develop a less violent relationship to it. In view of the many destructive conditions of the Anthropocene and the desperate attempts of the world community to control them, to prevent their expansion and, if possible, to reduce their extent, education for peace is of central importance. In its realization mimetic, ritual and gestural aspects play an important role. These learning processes are cognitive and performative; they are body-based and sensual and have an aesthetic dimension. With their mimetic, ritualistic and gestural character, they aim to develop and incorporate less violent behavior. It is also important to relate the learning processes of peace to the individuality of young people and to work on the tensions and contradictions between individuals and communities.