

Peace Education in times of war?

A European experience

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“Education is, quite simply, peacebuilding by another name. It is the most effective form of defense spending there is.”

Former UN Secretary
General Kofi Annan

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I. Peace Education in times of war?

The Russian war against Ukraine – a turning point (Zeitenwende)?

A (not only) German example

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz coined the term "Zeitenwende" — a turning of the times, a watershed moment:

- Russia not anymore considered as partner, but as enemy
- Enormous amount of armament
- The country has to become "fit for war"
- Voices for peace considered as traitors

Two answers to the current situation

- The world is becoming much more dangerous
 - We have a new and aggressive enemy
 - We have to protect us
 - We need to invest massively in armaments
- The world is becoming much more dangerous
 - We haven't done enough for peace
 - We need to look for peaceful solutions, this is our protection
 - We must return to collective security

Hard times for peace (education)?

- Any war is a defeat for the peace forces
- Any war leads to black-and-white thinking
- In any war pacifists are denounced as traitors
- Any war is a proof of the necessity of peace efforts
- This applies to any war: no peace without peace education

Obstacle Culture of war

- War is deeply rooted in people's culture
- The spirit of war is embedded within literature, poetry, rewritten history, media, language, widescreen movies and taken over and propagated in social media
- The culture of war is essential part of ideologies like patriarchy, capitalism, domination of nature or totalitarian thinking
- War, a product of history, seems to be a natural ingredient of human nature

Peace education as resistance and as healing

Implementing a culture of peace – a step towards more civilization:

- A resistance against the culture of violence and war
- A measure of violence prevention
- A means of reconciliation
- Exploring the possibilities of an alternative production of knowledge that resists, supplements or challenges traditional forms of knowledge

II. Peace education and peace politics

“No peace
without peace
education!”

Statement of the First Austrian
Forum for Peace AFP (July 2023)

- Peace-making and peacebuilding are not only political acts but social processes. They are equally tasks of politicians and experts as well as the responsibility of the whole society.
- To facilitate peace, a multitrack approach is needed in order to create a culture of conflict transformation and peace, addressing all levels and all parts of society.
- This shows the strategic and systemic role of peace education in any peace process.
- Peace education focusses on both, knowledge and skills as well as on attitudes and thus provides relevant life skills.

Comprehensive Peace Education

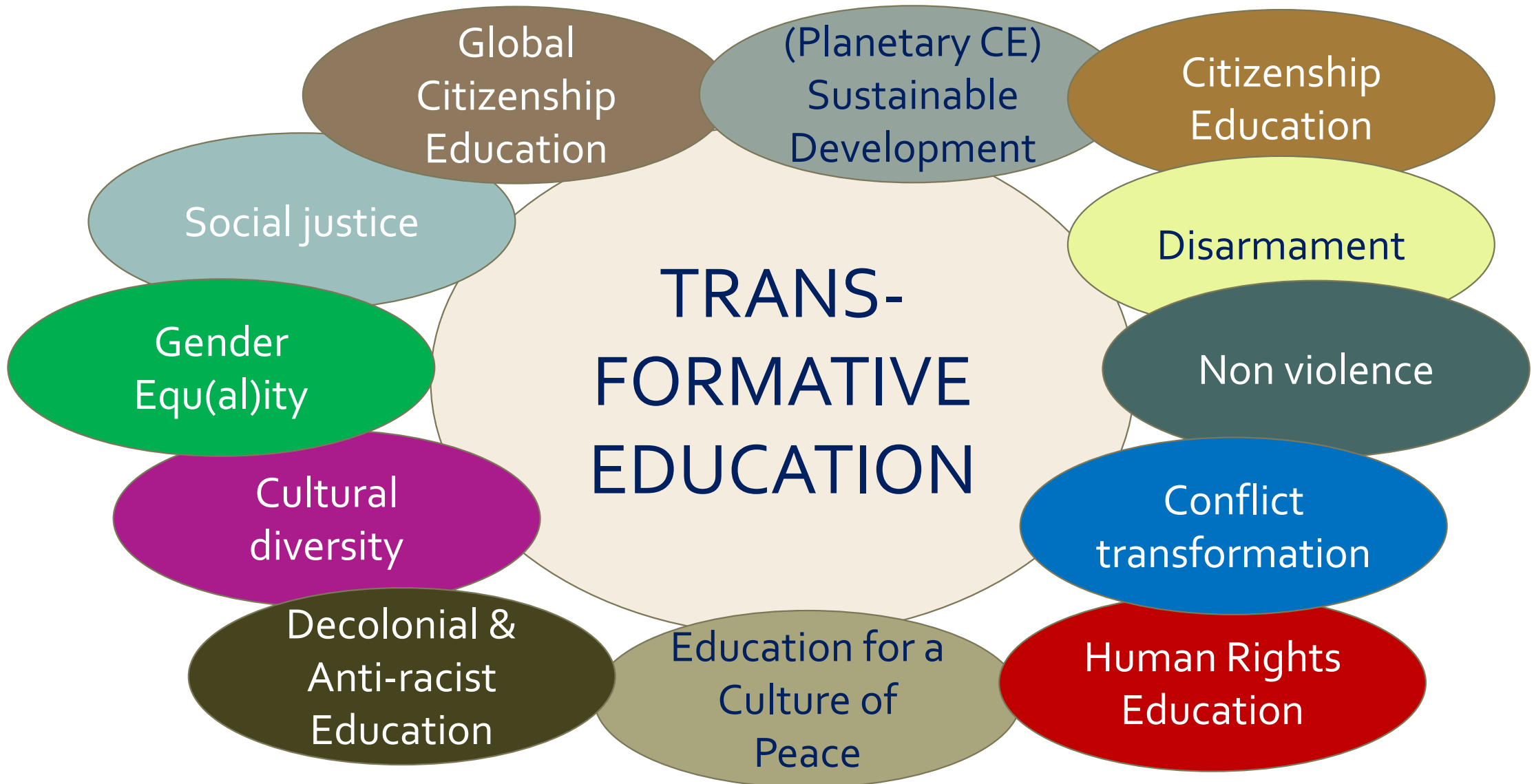
- “The general purpose of peace education is to promote the development of an authentic planetary consciousness that will enable us to function as global citizens and to transform the present human condition by changing the social structures and the patterns of thought that have created it. This transformational imperative must be at the center of peace education.”

Betty Reardon

Peace education as transformative education

- “The transformational imperative”
transformative education (the learner, the education, the “system”)
- “Transform the present human condition”
a secular “metamorphosis” of the humans (Edgar Morin)
- “Changing the social structures and the patterns of thought” > education for a culture of peace (UNESCO)
- “Planetary consciousness” (planetary = including ecological awareness) > education for planetary citizenship
- “Function as global citizens” > education for global citizenship

III. Fields of peace education



Global Citizenship Education

Combat nationalism

- Overcome “methodological nationalism” (Ulrich Beck)

Combat neoliberalism and „business globalization“

- Overcome the ideology of market, unconditional economic growth

Combat (neo-)colonial structures of dependency (the poor make the rich rich)

- Overcome the „colonial difference“ (Walter Mignolo): Western monopoly on knowledge production and transmission, and Eurocentrism

Combat resignation and inaction

- Capacity building for acting as responsible global citizens (paradigms, knowledge, skills)

Planetary Citizenship Education



HOMELAND EARTH
TERRE PATRIE

Combat anthropocentric thinking and beliefs

- Overcome our separation from the „rest“ of nature

Understand our common fate as citizens of „Homeland Earth“

- End the exploitation of all other beings and the whole planet Earth

Combat resignation and inaction of the human community of destiny

- Capacity building for acting as responsible planetary citizens (paradigms, knowledge, skills)

IV. Political and pedagogical challenges

Peace education and power relations

- Learning is not just accumulation of knowledge and skills
- We also become performers of existing power relations by using and passing on our knowledge
- But we can also use knowledge to question power relations
- What could a pedagogy look like that actually focuses on changing conditions rather than stabilizing them?

Dilemmata, challenges and opportunities of (peace) education

Normative approach versus democratic approach:

- How can the students be reached without at the same time imposing a specific perspective on them?
- How can learning processes be set in motion that resist disciplining the mind?
- How can spaces of thought be created that are conducive to dissent?

Dilemmata and opportunities of (peace) education

- Learning not as a kind of programming of the learners, but as an educational experience
- Principal open-endedness of any pedagogical activity
- Accepting the limits of the art of pedagogy
- Learning as an experience that is reflected upon one's own actions is the necessary step towards being reconnected with oneself and the world

V. Key concepts

Four key
concepts
(not only) for
peace
education

- Paulo Freire: Conscientization
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: Unlearning
- John Paul Lederach: Moral imagination
- Edgar Morin: Reform of thought

Paulo Freire
CONSCIENTIZATION

„Pedagogy of the
Oppressed“

- Against *banking model* of education: students as containers into which educators put knowledge > *emancipatory education*
- The process in which humans, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality.
- Awareness *and* transformation

Gayatri
Chakravorty
Spivak
UNLEARNING

- The problems:
 - power relations are also learned
 - socially rewarded ignorance and certainties
- Unlearning: transgressing and working through the trained certainties that perpetuate power relations
- An exercise in slowly and gradually breaking with the learned practices and habits of powerful differentiation that have become inscribed in habitus, body and actions

John Paul
Lederach
THE MORAL
IMAGINATION

- The capacity to recognize turning points and possibilities in order to venture down unknown paths and create what does not yet exist.
- The capacity to imagine and generate constructive processes that are rooted in the day-to-day challenges of violence and yet transcend these destructive patterns.
- The moments of possibility that pave the way for constructive change processes do not emerge through the application of a set of techniques or strategies, but rather arise out of something that approximates an artistic process.

Moral imagination requires:

- The capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships, one that includes even our enemies.
- The ability to embrace complexity without getting caught up in social schism.
- A commitment to the creative act.
- An acceptance of the risk that necessarily goes along with attempts to transcend violence.

Edgar Morin Reform of thought

„Seven Complex
Lessons in Education
for the Future“

- Our mode of thought prevents us from knowing our world
- Fragmented learning divided up into disciplines makes us unable to connect parts and wholes and to understand the totality
- Develop the aptitude to contextualize and globalize
- Consider the whole-part relation, the multidimensionality, the complexity
- How can we encourage a way of learning that is able to grasp general, fundamental problems and insert partial, circumscribed knowledge within them?

VI. Examples

Examples for some types of peace education I

Gorski kotar peace school



- Peace education to consolidate a peace process
- Croatian example

(No) common schools for former enemies



- Peace education to conclude and complete a peace process
- Northern Ireland and Bosnian examples

Examples for some types of peace education II

Stories from war veterans – former enemies



- Replacing a war mural by a mural showing social problems of youth
- Northern Ireland

„Peace Weeks“



- Learning to deal with conflicts – starting from daily life experiences
- 17.000 students trained so far at Schlaining Peace Castle, Austria

Examples for some types of peace education III

The kaki of Nagasaki



- Linking peace, environment, arts and memory politics
- Austrian or Italian examples

WW I: A all-European education project



A confrontation of
different voices,
traditions and
narratives

Two examples of global peace education

Peace Boat



- Japanese activists founded a peace university that constantly circles the globe.

The Hague Appeal for Peace Global Campaign for Peace Education



- Concepts
- Strategic planning
- Advocacy
- Networking
- Pilot projects

The challenges of the Russian-Ukrainian war

Psychological: Dealing with fear, indifference, insecurity, confusion ...

Educational: trust-building, safe spaces for open discussions, accepting diverging opinions

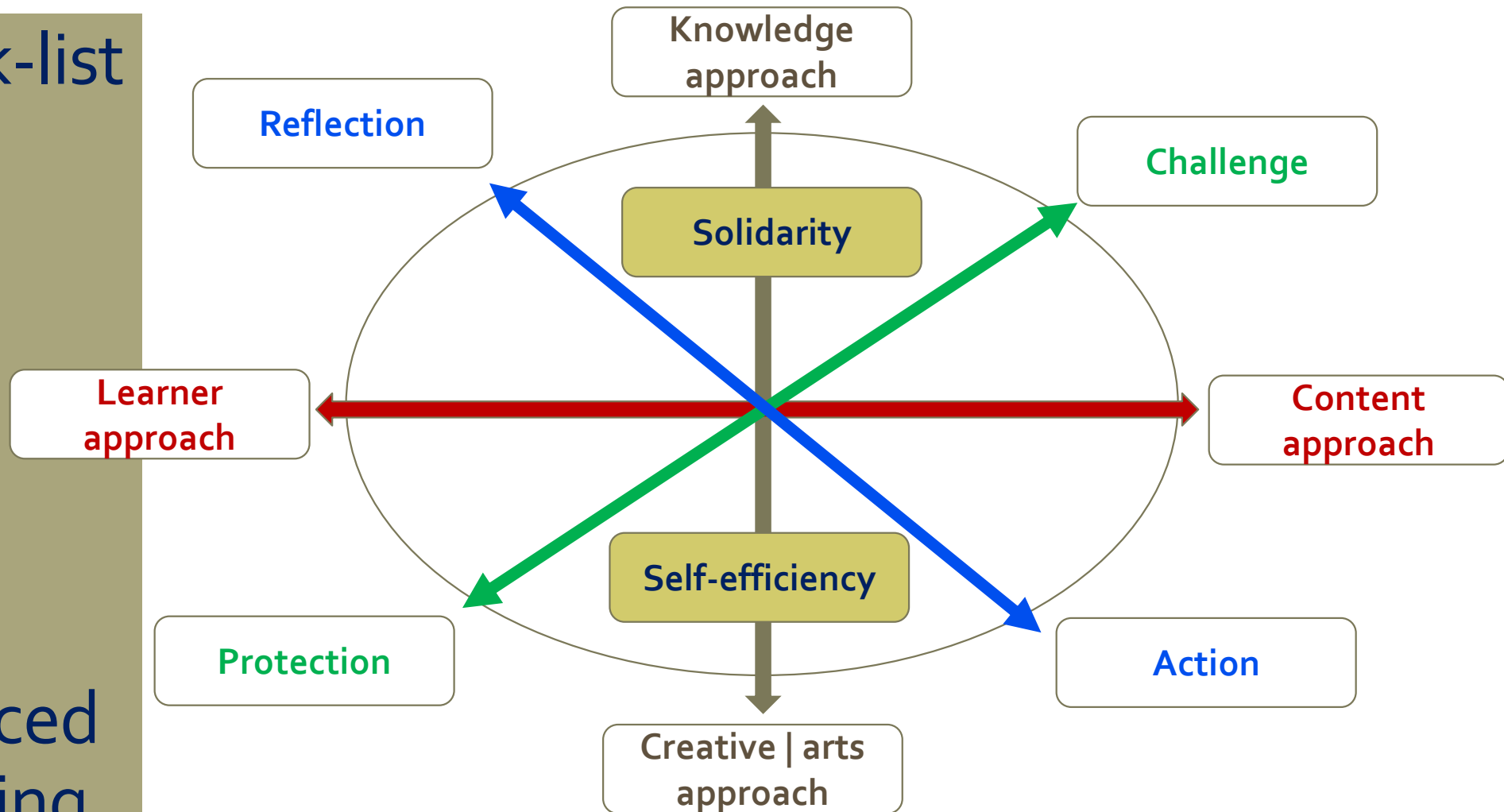
Political: violence vs. non-violence, geo-political issues

Intellectual: What is true? What is truth?
Accepting ambivalence and doubt; dealing with complexity

VII. Check-list for balanced education

Check-list

for a
balanced
teaching



Two final questions

F. Goya:
Duel with clubs

What planet will we leave our children?

Hans Jonas



Which children will we leave our world to?

Jaime Semprun

VIII. Resources

Documents & references

- **Hague Appeal for Peace** (NGO) 1999
<https://www.peace-ed-campaign.org/>
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https://earthcharter.org/read-the-earth-charter/?doing_wp_cron=1688118110.2699010372161865234375
- **Sustainable Development Goals** (UN) 2015, especially target 4.7
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- Manifesto **Homeland Earth** (For Planetary Thinking and Feeling, Planning and Acting) (ACP) 2021
<https://www.aspr.ac.at/en/education-training/aspr-campaigns/homeland-earth/homeland-earth/manifesto-homeland-earth#/>
- European Declaration on **Global Education** to 2050 (Dublin Declaration) (GENE) 2022
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- **Revised Recommendation** concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation, Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (UNESCO) 1974|2023
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