Chapter 7

Education for Peace and School Coexistence:
Plans and Projects in Spain and Andalusia

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ABSTRACT

There has been an influx of international currents in favour of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence since the 1990s. This has allowed the curriculum in Primary and Secondary Education to generate a wide range of differently focused plans and projects. One of the peculiarities of this phenomenon in Spain is its links with the deterioration in classroom coexistence, and, as a consequence, a number of different initiatives have been put in place to promote a Culture of Peace and Coexistence. In spite of the deployment of means and staff, it is clear from the analysis of two cases in Secondary Schools in Andalusia (Spain) that there have been scant results, as the influence of all these initiatives has only been superficial in schools. Given the failure of these initiatives, a drift towards authoritarianism in school coexistence discourses and practices is observed.

INTRODUCTION

Since the Educational Reform of the 1990s, Spain has been part of the international current in favour of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence. This process has had an impact on the school curriculum in Primary (ages 6-12) and Secondary (ages 12-18) Education, and has given rise to many education plans and projects with different focuses.

One of the peculiarities of this phenomenon in Spain has been its relationship with a problem of deteriorating coexistence in the schools, as it will be explained below. The origins of this trend can be traced back to the 1970s, as described in research studies by Dan Olweus in Sweden and Norway. Based on these studies, during the 80s and 90s, countries such as Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, the

Netherlands, and Japan implemented the Olweus Programme for the Prevention of Bullying (Olweus, 1993). Also, in the late 70s, the UNESCO proposed an Education for Peace based on the analysis and study of conflicts.

There were two relevant events within this context. One was the Yamoussoukro International Congress held in 1989, which defined the model of the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence. The other was the Delors Report of 1993. This proposed the establishment of an International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century. "Learning to live together" was defined as one of the pillars of this new education, and was adopted as a UNESCO Programme in 1995 (Delors et al., 1996). The global movement that grew out of this led to the "Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace" (United Nations, 1999) and to the "Manifesto 2000" (Manifesto, 2000) drafted by a group of Nobel laureates, which summarized the six key principles that define and determine the Culture of Peace. Also, the UN proclaimed 2000 to be the "International Year of the Culture of Peace" (United Nations, 1997) as well as establishing the "International Decade for the Promotion of the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010" (United Nations, 2001).

All this encouraged the expansion of these approaches in the school context, and the development of both research and policies of intervention (Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004). These initiatives are therefore framed in a general trend of growing interest and concern for "learning to live together" in schools and a redefinition of the role of schools in promoting the Culture of Peace.

THE NORMATIVE DISCOURSE: PLANS AND PROJECTS

A first path of intervention to address the problems of coexistence in schools, and therefore to promote a culture of peace and non-violence, was through the establishment of legal regulations and norms. This approach responded to a social and political demand which arose from the perception, real or imagined, of the deterioration of coexistence in schools. One could say that it was a "reactive" approach in that it was a reaction to a problematic situation, and an "assistential" approach in that it aimed at providing a solution without counting on the participation of those affected.

In a first analysis, this path offered apparent advantages for the development of life in schools. Moreover, it was reassuring with respect to the prevailing opinion among the agents involved (teachers, families, educational administration…). However, it also presented some weaknesses: its lack of linkage with the development of the curriculum, and the risk that those norms would be imposed without the participation of those involved, especially the pupils.

The Situation in Spain

First, it is necessary to clarify that in Spain the so-called "Education for Coexistence" is a cross-curricular theme that has been closely linked to another, "Education for Peace and Non-Violence". Thus, the phrase "Education for Coexistence", which generally connotes coexistence in the geopolitical sphere[1] and whose application therefore seems distant from the school environment, has in Spain, however, a genuine meaning, equivalent to the idea aforesaid of "Learning to live together".[2] This link is manifested, among other things, in the numerous legal regulations covering both issues together, as will be seen later.

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