



Country Profiles/Peace Education Context

Australia

Gary Shaw: *Department of Education & Early Childhood Development Victoria*

Australia is made up of six states; Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania and two territories, Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. The majority of the population of just over 21 Million people live on the eastern seaboard in the states of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

Schools are funded by a mix of federal and state money. The push for a national curriculum and standards has gathered momentum and is set to play a role in the way education policy is developed in the next few years, particularly from the federal government.

The federal government has in recent years provided significant investment into areas related to CRE & PE with frameworks and resources such as Civics and Citizenship Education, National Safe Schools, Values Education, anti-racism and Studies of Asia. Such initiatives are based on the premise that the most effective approaches for creating safe and peaceful schools are based on collaboration and shared responsibility between school leaders, teachers, students, parents and the wider community.

For the purposes of definition peace education and conflict resolution education are blended into a mix of approaches when applied to Australian schools. Peace education as a particular topic has currency in some states such as Queensland but generally education systems incorporate CRE & PE are through the provision of safe, supportive learning environments. This includes attention to such things as relationship building, reduction of bullying, social skills development, conflict management, violence prevention, peer mediation, restorative justice and multiculturalism etc.

Education continues to play an important role in the process of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The colonisation and settlement of Australia by Europeans and the resulting conflict and dispossession of the aboriginal inhabitants could best be described as an in-country conflict that requires ongoing attention. The new federal government is taking a lead in this area, e.g. national apology to 'stolen generations'.

Burundi

Prosper Ndabishuriye: *Youth in Reconstruction of the World in Destruction*

Burundi is located in Central Africa, bordering with Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania. In size, Burundi is about the size of the state, Maryland and inhabited by Twa, Hutu and Tutsi; together they are called Burundians. It was colonized first by Germany and then by Belgium, which many agree was an extremely oppressive regime.

The seeds of conflict were sown during that time as the colonial regime discriminated among the three ethnic groups—the Twa (the first ethnic group to live in Burundi) the Hutu and the Tutsi--by favouring the Tutsi. This took the form of excluding Hutu, representing 85% of the population of Burundi, and Twa from higher education, which also limited their economic opportunities. This racism reflected the European bias that the more western-looking African—like the Tutsi and peoples of northern Africa—were superior to the Bantu-type African common to Central and South Africa. So while all the three ethnic groups speak one language--which is Kirundi—and had lived in peace before colonial times, envy, pride, fear and animosity grew among these groups and was used to the advantage of the colonial powers. As a result of this inequity, the Tutsi, which is a minority at 14% of the population, came to dominate the government, military and economy, excluding the majority Hutu and the lesser numbers of Twa from freedom and opportunity.

This great social injustice erupted in Burundi in the years following Burundi's independence in 1962. Conflict and killings started in 1965, and continued in 1972, 1988, 1993, driven by the Tutsi-dominated government who feared for their position of control to be shared.

Similar to what happened in Rwanda, as many have seen in the new movie Hotel Rwanda, there was no effective intervention from the international community to intercede in all this bloodshed.

Colombia

Ramiro Ovalle Ilanes: *Valle Del Cauca*

Colombia has always lived in a culture of violence, from the discovery of America until the current moment. The principal cause is the stratified society; rich families on one side and a lot of poor families on the other. This favored the beginning of the drug traffic and the guerrilla. The people left for the jungle to fight against the government, and other people were and are working on the production of cocaine. Currently, the guerrilla has lost prestige due to the quantity of people they have kidnapped and tortured violently.

All these problems have caused a new culture of violence to invade the whole country. The most affected are the children and youth because they are called to work for the guerrilla and are offered good money.

The good people unite their efforts to promote peace, construct a social order and reconciliation between all. This problem is noticed in the schools because a lot of

aggression or bullying is presented in the schools, and it is a serious problem for the teachers and families. Our region, Valle del Cauca, is involved in teaching students about resolution of conflicts and human rights in all degrees, from the time they are five, until they are seventeen years old.

The principal conflict is armed confrontation because it has generated a militarization of this conflict and the problem is in the civilian life. For that, the construction of a peace agreement and the promotion of mechanisms to resolve these conflicts is necessary; this is the objective of our program. Another problem is the child soldiers in the guerrilla. At this moment, there are 15.000 children in the guerrilla. Also, the delinquency of the youths is increased, because there are many young people that are stealing from people and killing in the streets. There are national and regional policies for the protection and prevention in these topics for the schools.

Georgia

Nino Shushania: *Foundation for the Development of Human Resources*

The South Caucasus, comprising the three states of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, is a region plagued by unresolved ethno political conflicts, political instability, and protracted economic crisis. The region is beset by poverty, corruption, slow political and economic reforms, large refugee and IDP populations, grave environmental problems, and scant respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Surrounded by the three regional powers: Iran, Russia, and Turkey and located on the crossroads of Europe and Asia, the South Caucasus has also been at the center of post-cold war geopolitical rivalries. To a considerable extent, the significant oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Sea, specifically in the Azerbaijani sector, have amplified regional rivalries for political and economic influence in the region.

The South Caucasian states acceded to independence in the early 1990s on a wave of anti-Soviet popular and nationalist movements that abortively attempted to establish democratic forms of government, while being bogged down into ethnic warfare with minority populations and/or neighbors. These wars worsened the economic recession in the region, and led to the revival of authoritarian tendencies in society. By the late 1990s, the region had achieved some stability, but at the cost of democratic setbacks and three unresolved ethno political conflicts frozen along cease-fire lines. In spite of increased international attention and attempts to resolve these conflicts through negotiations, none of the three is close to a solution. To differing degrees, these three conflicts are all at risk of erupting again in a violent manner; moreover, ethnic tensions elsewhere in the region exist that are at risk of escalation.

The regional situation in the South Caucasus is conflict-prone and inherently unstable as a result of several interrelated factors. Weak state structures breed corruption, incapacitate law enforcement, prevent tax collection, and lessen governments' legitimacy and control. Socio-economic problems create poverty and frustration and dangers of social reactions against mismanaged governments; and a weak political culture prone to nationalism and the personalization of politics breeds fragmentation and the risk of aggressive populism. Meanwhile, state weakness is exacerbated by regional powers, and transnational criminal or subversive groups that take advantage of state weakness, corruption and public frustration to operate in the region, increase their control over state structures, and gain followers.

India

Leban Serto: *Peace Education Activist.*

India is the world's largest democracy and home to more than one billion people. As it is true in all nations, major problem exists. The country is plagued by inter state or intra-state and community violence, which is yet to be solved. In India, one will see two categories of people that form the society. One side are the rich, and on the other side, one hears of farmers committing suicide due to debt and poverty. The poor are becoming poorer; the most illiterate, and the most malnourished people die of hunger. Among them are mostly children and women. Tribals, Dalits and ethnic minorities are the most deprived in the country. Caste and Ethnic discrimination continues to promote conflict and violence in the Indian peninsula.

Most Government actions are now directed from the top of national and state bureaucracies and most individuals and communities have little voice. Many Government programs are not effective because those served; often poor and illiterate, have no power to deal with their public servants. There is a continuing problem of funding services at optimum levels. The mixture of limited services and the undue authority of officials create an imbalance of power, with corruption and bribery as the norm in dealing with official agencies. The educational system, based on an old British model, combined with large numbers of students from poorly educated families and major competitions for jobs and government stipends, stifles individual creativity and contributions.

There is a long, prevalent history of bribes, payoffs and kickbacks at every level of government. These are so prevalent that business and individuals often build them into the budget. Unless a new attitude emerges, people will continue to distrust their government and continue to be exploited. A new thinking, a new attitude, a new morality must emerge in individuals in order to become informed, honest and fully participating citizens. These attitudes can be taught and applied to life throughout the school years. This large system needs major modification that will require large numbers of people to change their attitude and behaviour.

Thailand

Vanchai Vatanasapt: *King Prajadhipok's Institute*

There have been conflicts and violence that have caused injuries and seriously crippled the students, especially in and among the vocational students. There are increasing trends of violence among youth. According to a survey, the principle causes of the violence are 1) Educational System of the high competitiveness, the rote learning, the punishment system 2) the violence in family 3) Media.

The government realized the increasing violence, and has announced the Prime Minister's Order in the *Policy of Peaceful Conflict Management* in September 2003, and another cabinet approval to set up the *Institute of Dispute Resolution* at Universities. This Institute should include the establishment of a conflict resolution curriculum. It should include ongoing activities as training, seminars, research and consultations, including hands-on work. This result is, that although conflicts continue

to occur, people have begun to learn the process of dialogue, principled interest-based negotiation and meaningful public participation. These training and activities involved several ministries such as Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and many other Agencies of both public and private.

With the direction of the Prime Minister's order, several Universities have started the degree program on conflict resolution and management. The Ministry of Education through the support and control of the Office of the Educational Council, launched during 2007 for Secondary Schools and Vocational School, a program on Conflict Resolution Education and Peace Education. The program was planned to run mediation programs in 80 schools to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. The Ministry of Justice and King Prajadhipok's Institute has been the core institutes to support and train the Administrators, the teachers and students. The initiation of the program was introduced by the academic support of Professor Tricia Jones from Temple University and the core member of INCREPE who run the conference and two consecutive work shops in Thailand in October, 2008

Uganda (Great Lakes Region)

Gesa Mike Munabi: *Students for Global Democracy*

The region has a significant share of conflicts with the epicentre of these conflicts varying from country to country; notably Uganda (1981-86), Democratic Republic of Congo (1996-97) and Burundi (1993-2001 and 2003) The rest of the countries such as Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania have experienced intra-state conflict reflective in ethnic, religious and political tensions and ways of life.

The consequences of these conflicts have imposed regional political, economic and social cultural costs. As a result, low economic productivity, destruction of property, depletion of natural resources, increased proliferation of small arms and light weapons are profound in the region. Yet youth in the region for a long time have been used as agents of disorientation, political and economic pawns by those chasing and pushing for jacketed whims.

The youth have been abducted and forced to commit atrocities, forced into marriages as sex slaves, exploited as cheap labour and used as stones by politicians. Many youth today in the region having been abducted, are increasingly getting passionate with issues of peace building. They are using multiplicity of ideas and thinking as interpreted from post independence perspective to address these issues. This means they can add value to the processes of conflict resolution if their efforts are clearly mapped out.

Philippines

Loreta Castro: *Center for Peace Education*

There are two major and protracted armed conflicts in the country- one is between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) and the other is between the GRP and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

A peace process was attempted with the CPP-NPA after the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986 which resulted in a few agreements. But this peace process was indefinitely suspended a few years ago and the armed conflict between the two has continued. The MILF and the government in the meantime have signed a ceasefire agreement but a comprehensive peace agreement is not yet in sight in the immediate future. Needless to say these two armed conflicts have caused so much displacement, destruction and suffering to both combatants and non-combatants.

In Mindanao, where the MILF is active, historical prejudices need to be addressed. Although the roots of this armed conflict are really political and economic in nature, some have used religious differences to exacerbate the conflict. Generations of youth have been receiving negative messages about the other religious group, and this cycle has largely been perpetuated by fear of and ignorance about the other.

The challenge for others, including educational institutions, is to accompany the “formal peace process” between the GRP and MILF with a “people-to-people peace process”. It is against this backdrop that the Center for Peace Education initiated a “twinning project” between Miriam College (MC), a Catholic school located in Metro Manila, and Rajah Muda High School (RMHS), a public school attended by Muslims located in Pikit, Cotabato. The latter is a conflict area in Central Mindanao.

Serbia (Balkan)

Tatjana Popovic: *Nansen Dialogue Centre*

Taking into consideration the size of the region of the Western Balkans, cooperation between countries is needed and inevitable in all spheres of life. The main obstacles to it are unresolved issues from the past, different interpretations of history of the 1990s and slow process of reconciliation.

In relation to Peace Education, there was no coordinated activity at the regional or sub-regional level, meaning that crucial stakeholders such as schools, Ministries of Education and broader public were not ready to overcome deep divisions created between countries and territorial units during the 1990s.

Regional approach was needed since in spite of significant differences between ex-Yugoslav societies they share important parts of modern history, similar elements of social structure and values; they are faced with the same problems common to societies in transitional period both in economical and political sense.

Although many programmes and trainings that were organised in the past decade throughout the region could be generally named Peace Education, there was neither coordinated strategy nor well-developed curricula for primary and secondary schools. In most of the cases, non-governmental organisations were initiators, providers and often a lobbying party for inclusion of the related topics in regular school curricula.

As a part of GPPAC Regional process, the Regional Secretariat and ECCP created a plan for regional cooperation that included the Regional Conference on Peace Education and Conflict Resolution in the Schools in the Balkans (April 2007, in

Belgrade) and the three Regional trainings on Mediation and CR in Schools in the Balkans for teachers and peace practitioners in 2007.

Achievements at the regional level: Civic Education became a subject in primary and secondary schools in Serbia; Conflict Transformation and Youth Empowerment in Serbia run by GTZ, Schools without Violence by UNICEF in Serbia; multi-ethnic schools in Croatia ("The New School Project" in Osijek) and in Macedonia (Programme for support of local self governance - Jegunovce municipality).

Obstacles: unstable political situation, institutions are being rebuilt, mono-ethnic societies or communities.

West Africa

Francis Acquah: *WANEP*

Nowhere on the continent of Africa have the experiences of violent conflicts been gravely and deeply entrenched as in the West African sub-region which is home to some of the world's most brutal and protracted conflicts. Over a million children have been killed in armed conflicts in West Africa with many more having suffered horrific physical, psychological and sexual abuses. A lot of young people have been victims of these wars and quite a number have been lured and drawn in as perpetrators.

Over 50% of child soldiers in Africa are found in West Africa. Over 60,000 youths have been actively engaged in armed conflicts in West Africa, especially in the MRU and Kaabu sub-region. The effects of young people being key perpetrators of violence in the sub-region have included the minimisation of the value and respect for human life and this has inevitably contributed to the loss of positive social values such as respect and discipline in society. It is therefore urgent and imperative that measures are taken to revitalise our social values beginning with the younger generation.

It is in this light that the WANEP deemed it imperative to promote peace and social responsibility among youth across the sub-region. The development of the Active Non-violence and Peace Education programme which is now known as the Youth and Peace Education Programme is therefore an effort to respond to the high level of violence that has crept into our society to the point where institutions of discipline and security such as the school, the home and places of worship have become breeding grounds for violence and new sets of values have eroded away the culture of respect, love and caring for one another.