



Identity, Interdependence & Nonviolent Transformations

Practical Priorities of Education in Transitions to Peace

The International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE) 2007 will be hosted by Baketik, the Peace Centre in Arantzazu in the in the Basque Country (Spanish Estate) from July 14-22, 2007. The event is being co-organized by Baketik and the Peace Education Center at Teachers College, Columbia University. IIPE 2007 will explore the theme of “*Identity, Interdependence and Nonviolent Transformations - Practical Priorities of Education in Transitions to Peace*,” an appropriate theme for a region that has suffered forty years of continuous violent conflict.

In March 2006, the armed group ETA issued a declaration of a permanent ceasefire. The process around this event opened a period of hope in the society. Although recent events have darkened this hope, there is a need to go on in the search for peace. This is why IIPE 2007 will focus on the challenges and possibilities for this and other nonviolent transformations to take place, especially as they relate to identity and interdependence. The IIPE program will inquire into what attitudes, values, processes and practices; what types of resistances and constructive activities; and what educational practices facilitate and sustain nonviolent transformations. The ETA declaration of a permanent ceasefire provides a very hopeful and special moment for the learning to be conducted at this year's IIPE that is especially amenable to participants from the host region and readily adaptable to other's contexts from around the world. Those accepted to attend will participate in a residential learning experience where reflection and exchange will take place on these and other issues on the peace culture agenda in Europe, the Mediterranean region, and in many other parts of the world.

In our rapidly changing and interdependent world, what and how can peace education contribute to nonviolent transformations? In exploring this question special attention will be given to the concepts of identity and interdependence from historical, present and future perspectives. Understanding these concepts and illuminating their interrelatedness will be central to the IIPE inquiry. The sharing of experiences and offering of practical models will be fostered so that each participant may find new strategies and perspectives to bring back to their working communities.

Identity

In the Basque Country of Northern Spain questions of identity and multiple identities are at the heart of the ongoing conflict. These questions include: How do we preserve different cultural identities in this world of macro structures? How do we prevent national narratives that create exclusion? How do we overcome idealizations of fighting? How do we combine cultural identities with multicultural societies with transnational dynamics? How do we understand all of these questions within a perspective of global citizenship and human security? The construction of national narratives that bring factions together in constructive partnerships is also important.

Interdependence

Europe has a long history of conflicts that have evoked multiple responses, reflections, and initiatives. The perspectives emerging from these responses to conflict have led to multiple questions about and for educating for a culture of peace. How will this history be transmitted? How can educators address the suffering of victims, prisoners, and families in armed conflicts? How can memory contribute to reconciliation? How can these concerns be brought into the construction and reframing of national narratives? How can peace be nurtured at the individual, local, national, regional, and global levels? How can cross-regional collaborations be fostered?

Education for Nonviolent Transformations

IPE provides an interactive, experiential space to explore innovative ways of educating for peace that is rooted in learning from and with each other in community. In this forum we will have the unique opportunity to explore and model ways in which peace education can work in multicultural settings and we will also exchange pedagogical approaches, successful examples and existing traditions from our various contexts, cultures and practices.

Education for Nonviolent Transformations refers to the challenge of educating for transforming and resisting injustice, poverty, oppression, environmental destruction, manipulation, moral degradation, corruption, and abusive uses of power amongst others. There is a need to consider multiple possibilities for both transformation and appropriate forms of resistance. The IPE will also explore the notion of "transformative resistance" in which we will examine how forms of resistance can be simultaneously preventive and consciousness raising as well as transformative learning processes. In exploring this sub-theme we ask: What links can be provided for reciprocal learning in formal and informal educational settings with nonviolent transformative action learning and with education for reconciliation? What new pedagogies need to be created to address these urgent concerns? What are the roles of the media, social movements, public administrators, civic organizations, artists, scientists, intellectuals, and economic agents? Where does one locate oneself as an educator within these multiple roles and identities?

Practical Priorities of Education in Transitions to Peace

This special sub-theme of the IPE inquires into how we can actualize, adapt and design peace education to particular moments of transition towards peace that are being experienced in the world, with special consideration given to the Basque Country (Spanish Estate) and participants' local communities. As a comprehensive, holistic and integrative field, Peace Education has broad transformational goals. Goals such as the transformation of the "war system" are integral considerations to most peace education practice and content, yet such goals overwhelm many practitioners with so much data that it can be challenging to translate these goals to present and local contexts where peace education initiatives are taking place. In exploring this sub-theme the IPE community will consider how we can translate these goals to the moment and context in which peace education is being practiced. How do we start or develop a practical project on peace education in our own communities? How do we determine and assess the needs of our communities in determining the goals of our initiatives? How do we keep the broader goals in mind while designing educational initiatives that meet local needs?