RECONCILIATION AND PEACE EDUCATION IN CYPRUS: WHAT WILL IT TAKE?

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Abstract

This paper explores the need for and challenges involved in implementing peace education in a post-conflict region such as Cyprus. The author discusses the major components necessary to pursue systemic peace education in schools as well as the contentions associated with taking such actions in a divided society. The author provides a first-person account of her research observations in Cyprus while there in 2006 as a Fulbright Scholar and calls upon lessons learned during similar work in Northern Ireland, as a means of providing a comparative backdrop. Identified efforts in the Turkish-Cypriot and the Greek-Cypriot educational systems are discussed in the context of building the infrastructure necessary for peace education to take hold, as a societal stepping stone to reconciliation, in Cyprus.

> Access to education and to various forms of learning is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a culture of peace. A comprehensive system of education and training is needed for all groups of people at all levels and forms of education, both formal and non-formal. The development of a holistic approach, based on participatory methods and taking into account the various dimensions of education for a culture of peace (peace and non-violence, human rights, democracy, tolerance, international and intercultural understanding, cultural and linguistic diversity) is its main objective.
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> — UNESCO

Cyprus is a divided society where deep-seated feelings of injustice and mistrust on both sides of the divide have played a powerful role in obviating diplomatic peacemaking efforts over the past three decades. Clearly, politically engineered settlements will never be enough to mend the walls of fear, anger and division that have plagued the people of this small island for so long. What is obvious to those familiar with the socio-political context of Cyprus is that, far beyond diplomatic efforts to negotiate a peace settlement, there persists a fundamental need for comprehensive energies to be devoted toward building trust, mutual understanding, a sense of restorative justice and interdependence within and between the Turkish-Cypriot (T/C) and Greek-Cypriot (G/C) communities. Without taking such systemic

measures, meaningful reconciliation between the two primary communities of Cyprus cannot be achieved. Lederach (1997) has stated that, in divided societies, reconciliation requires both a 'focus' and a 'locus: a 'focus on the relational aspects of conflict and solution; and, a 'locus', the social space where people, ideas, and stories come together.

"Positive peace" (Reardon, 2001) is achieved by facilitating processes for challenge, critical examination and exploration of diverse perspectives, within and between conflicting groups in a society. Rather than simply seeking the reduction or management of violence, positive peace aims to achieve non-violent and creative conflict transformation in a society (Galtung, 1996). Conflict is defined by the human experience and, ultimately, provides the opportunity for human transformation. Conflict transformation, as a human process, seeks to "transform dysfunctional relationships among parties to a conflict and aims at creating common intellectual and value space among the parties. The creation of common intellectual and value space requires measures other than structural measures to deal with the complexities of deep-rooted conflicts" (Eralp and Beriker, 2005, p. 177).

Motivational theories have highlighted human needs as a driving force behind interpersonal conflict (Opotow, 2000); human needs for security, identity, freedom, distributive justice and participation also play a critical role in inter-group conflict (Fisher, 2000). The language of conflict is based in human affect (Jones, 2000). Some have even defined conflict as "an emotionally defined and driven process" (Bodtker and Jameson, 2001, p. 263). All of this is to say that conflict and its management represent a very human enterprise. Conflict resolution cannot be addressed effectively without taking the human factor into account; resolving conflict and pursuing reconciliation in a divided society must incorporate the human experience at all levels. In Cyprus, the almost singular reliance on diplomatic efforts to settle "the Cyprus Problem" has counter-intuitively resulted in insufficient effort being placed into building the requisite human and social capital needed for positive peace, or what Russell (1981) referred to as a "just peace".

This is not to say that Cyprus has not had a longstanding and valiant grass-roots peace movement working on the ground throughout the years. For over three decades, grass-roots bi-communal activism aimed at conflict transformation in this divided society has been at work engaging daring activists from both T/C and G/C communities in common goals (Laouris, 2004). However, despite the fact that they are locally grown activists, most of their activity over the years has been conducted through the auspices of the USA (for example, through the Cyprus Fulbright Commission) and the UN (Broome, 1998; Fisher, 2001). Bolstering this grass roots energy, Cyprus served as a testing ground in the 1990s for 'multi-track diplomacy' (Diamond and McDonald, 1996) which views social peace building (approaching peace through the human element) as the most effective means of compounding

diplomacy to produce meaningful peace in a conflict-affected society. Recent investigation however suggests that the bi-communal movement in Cyprus has lost its steam. The bi-communal activist community is reportedly feeling tremendous discouragement since the defeat of the 2004 referendum which seemed to dismiss, in one fell swoop, their decades-long struggle to promote a settlement (personal communication with US based cultural anthropology researcher, L. Modenos, 20 June 2006).

Despite these setbacks in grass-roots peace building efforts, the G/C community within Cyprus, since its accession to the EU, has been further compelled to look beyond its own borders at models of best practice in other European states. Requirements for aligning with 'the European dimension' are increasingly being articulated in the G/C public sector. At the same time, the T/C community, empowered by calls for building 'civil society' and encouraged by Turkey's seeming prospects for EU accession, also has begun to reach toward European models of best practice. One such path that the EU has promulgated encourages countries to undertake formal educational initiatives to build the human and social capital necessary for people to learn to live together (OECD, 2001). If people are ever to live interdependently with each other in post-conflict regions, they must be helped to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes that underpin social cohesion. This means learning to understand the other, trust the other and problem-solve with the other. These are the goals of peace education, goals that are now increasingly being underwritten worldwide by formal, international initiatives such as the UN Declaration for the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010.

Peace Education

Ask twenty educationalists to define 'peace education', and twenty different conceptualisations might likely emerge. While the objective of this paper is not to operationalise peace education, it is important for the reader to understand the basic tenets upon which this paper's discussion is based. In the broadest terms, peace education can be considered to include all informed actions taken in the name of promoting the ability of individuals to live interdependently and responsibly on this earth. Fountain (1999) defined UNICEF's conception of peace education this way:

> Peace education refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-group, national or international level.

While this article speaks to peace education as carried out through the formal school system, it is important to understand that peace education can and should take place in communities, families and workplaces as well (Reardon, 1997).

The Challenges to Peace Education in Cyprus

While the goals of peace education as stated here seem worthy enough, the notion of educating for peace in divided societies, where protracted conflict holds sway, is more elusive and contentious. This was brought home clear to me when, upon being invited to present the keynote address at an educational conference in Nicosia, I was advised not to speak about my peace education work in both the T/C and the G/C educational systems for fear that it might offend those educational authorities present in the audience for whom such discussion would represent "recognition" of the other. This advice, I was told, was given in deference to those who believe that the goals of peace education, especially those that would promote reconciliation across the divide, should not be broached in schools until a political settlement is achieved.

It has been argued that formal education serves as the medium through which a society comes to define itself. Its norms and values are articulated and transferred from generation to generation through its educational system (Glenn, 1988). Not accidentally, the educational systems in divided societies typically serve to strengthen the historical narrative of division on each side of the divide. In broken regions such as Cyprus and Northern Ireland, where post-conflict hostility and separation has been in place for decades, education serves to reinforce the past. On the island of Cyprus, two completely separate systems of education operate with virtually no inter-communications between them. In the north of the island (which is a region politically recognised only by itself and Turkey), there is an educational system that serves the Turkish-Cypriot community. In the Republic of Cyprus in the south, the educational system serves primarily the Greek-Cypriot community. Cyprus is divided by the "Green Line" which separates its two primary communities along geopolitical, cultural and religious lines and dramatically reinforces the societal conflicts that underpin the division. This means that the vast majority of children in Cyprus are educated in segregated, single-identity environments where they come into contact only with "their own," where their classmates and teachers come from the same cultural background, and where they learn ethnocentric versions of history and national identity. Similar to Northern Ireland in this respect, the inter-relationship that exists in Cyprus between politics, culture and religion has assured links between the church, government and education. As a direct reflection of this, what is taught in the G/C school system and how it is taught is influenced by the Orthodox tradition; in the T/C educational system, the influence of religious tradition is less apparent but political influences, largely from mainland Turkey, remain significant.

Given these ethnocentric divisions in Cyprus, peace education would logically suggest itself in the pursuit of social cohesion. While in Cyprus in 2006, my work sought to collaborate with local educationalists to promote systemic peace education through the development of training frameworks for teachers and counsellors in both the Turkish-Cypriot and the Greek-Cypriot educational systems. This work primarily entailed action research and consultation with teachers, students and administrators in the schools, with faculty and trainers in university and training institutes, and with the educational authorities in both systems. I have collected both qualitative data from interviews and ethnographic observations in the schools and communities as well as quantitative data in the form of student and teacher surveys. This paper is based upon the preliminary findings of my work in Cyprus, which are presented here in the comparative context of similar work I have done in Northern Ireland.

In speaking about the goals of rapprochement between the G/C and the T/C communities, it is important to note that there are more than two groups populating this island. Beyond the indigenous Cypriot population, ethnic diversity has been increasing over the past decade as a result of globalisation, immigration, and the migration of asylum seekers and refugees (Trimikliniotis and Pantelides, 2003). According to EUROSTAT (2004) figures, non-nationals represented 9.4 per cent of the population in Cyprus in 2004, a jump from 4.2 per cent recorded in 1990. As a result of the influx of immigrants, 5.5 per cent of the primary school population and about 6.2 per cent of secondary level students in the G/C educational system are currently non-indigenous children, according to data acquired through phone correspondence with the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) 24 May 2006. This represents a total of 6,900 minority students, up from the 5,500 estimated just two years prior. For a small island, this represents a considerable diversity presence.

It is also important to recognise that the T/C community is itself not homogeneous but rather is "comprised of Turkish Cypriots who resided there before 1974 (at that time, 18 per cent of the total population was estimated to be T/C) and those who emigrated from Turkey after 1974" (Tank, 2002, p. 156). No doubt, these layers of diversity add to the complexity of pursuing peace education in Cyprus. For each of these subgroups, there are distinct socio-cultural factors that distinguish their identity relationship to Cyprus. There is little in the way of a collective national identity in the north of Cyprus. The increasing diversity has created its own form of internal inter-group conflict in the north, where expressed biases over relative status as indigenous versus immigrant are increasing. This diversity in the north has also invoked increased concerns among members of the G/C community. In the north of Cyprus, reliable demographic data as to the increasing numbers of peoples coming from mainland Turkey (commonly referred to as "settlers") and other

developing countries is hard to garner. While "talk on the street" suggests the percentages of immigrants are beginning to outnumber the indigenous Turkish-Cypriot population, this has not been substantiated. Ethnic data gathered during a census carried out in April 2006 and just published in 2007 revealed that, out of an overall population of 256,000, about 178,000 are citizens (of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, 'TRNC') and that 120,000 of these are of full Turkish-Cypriot parentage, with another 12,000 claiming one Turkish-Cypriot parent (Bahceli, 2007). In "Beyond Numbers", a demographic report published by PRIO, peace researcher Mete Hatay (2005) discounted arguments that indigenous Turkish Cypriots are being outnumbered by mainland Turks settling on the island. In referring to the census data, he concluded that, while Turkish Cypriots were a minority in the overall population, only around 24 per cent of citizens in the north of Cyprus were of mainland Turkish origin.

Since the partial lifting of the restrictions on crossing the buffer zone in 2003, hundreds of thousands have passed back and forth across the "Green Line". Despite this increasing flow of peoples moving daily across the UN patrolled buffer zone, meaningful cross-community contact is still minimal. My research with students and teachers in both the G/C and T/C school systems during the spring of 2006 consistently found that most of the children (as well as the classroom teachers) I interviewed reported having no substantial experience with individuals from "the other side". For most T/C and G/C youth in Cyprus, there continues to be no personally informed understanding of 'the other'. My time in their respective classrooms however gave reason for hope: consistently, the students I came across demonstrated fascination in hearing about 'the other side', imploring me to give them my impressions of the other community, what they talked about and how they were seen by them.

From a systemic perspective, mistrust toward 'the other' continues to be reinforced on the part of children, if not by deliberate design then as the outcome of the singular ethno-political worldview they are exposed to in their schools. Among several accounts I came across in my research in the schools, I recall two that stand out as prime examples of the inter-group prejudice that still permeates these young people's educational lives in the classroom. I recall one teacher from a rural G/C elementary school who shared this account of an incident in her classroom: following a student's class reading of a poem that focused on the beauty of trees, the school principal who was visiting in the class that afternoon followed the reading by launching into an unsettling account of how "the Turks took away all our trees". For these youngsters, the impact of this single event was to subtly reinforce the message of injustice and fear related to their counterparts in the north. Equally disturbing was the account shared by a T/C secondary student who said she was taught by one of her class teachers that all Greek Cypriots carry weapons, thus

reinforcing in her young mind the notion that her Greek neighbours to the south were to be feared and defended against (which she admitted to still feeling) In divided societies where children are educated in ethnically segregated systems, mistrust and hostility toward the other can be reinforced in these ways, especially when there are no other systemic opportunities built in for students to develop tolerance of differences across the divide (Church, Johnson and Visser, 2004). When people continue to harbour feelings of injustice in relation to 'the other,' as is commonly the case in post-conflict zones where acts of previous violence have destroyed lives, property and dignity, it is very difficult to negotiate coexistence (Zuzovski, 1997). Without ordinary ways for young people to learn how to live cooperatively with 'the other' on this island, how will the next generation of citizens in Cyprus be prepared to be interdependent members of the global society, let alone to achieve rapprochement between the two communities?

To build sustainable peace in this region, a dramatic change in worldview is needed, a reframed understanding of 'the other' must be developed and the insular systems that serve to propagate an ethos of division must be transformed. Only through broadly based initiatives that seek to promote social cohesion in developmental and systemic ways will sustainable peace be possible. Given the conditions of entrenched division that exist, it is clear that formal opportunities need to be provided for the youth of each community to learn about 'the other,' to gain an appreciation for mutual understanding and respect, to develop empathy and tolerance, and to build the skills and behaviours needed to live and work cooperatively not only on this island but in an increasingly diverse world. In divided societies, fear that is coupled with the absence of knowledge, precludes opportunities for social cohesion. This rings true when considered in relation to a recent G/C university study that found that one of the primary reasons people feared a settlement with the T/C community was potential loss of their religion (Cyprus Weekly, 23 June 2006).

As the term suggests, peace education is all about promoting knowledge. In examining conflict dynamics in divided societies, Lederach (1997) noted that while a lack of knowledge can contribute to conflict, it is also true that providing knowledge to people can cue conflict by raising awareness, which in turn can generate the demand for social change. In 2000-2001, while conducting action research in integrated schools in Northern Ireland (a divided society where a well acknowledged "culture of silence" cloaks the protracted conflict and inter-group animosity), I found that, despite having both Protestant and Catholic children together in the classrooms, teachers consistently avoided discussion related to the issues underpinning the conflict narrative; it was as if, through avoidance, the sectarianism could be 'swept under the carpet'. This would suggest that peace education was not systemically working in the integrated schools at that time

(Johnson, 2002). While increased knowledge can generate demands for change, the results can be positive for the entire society. By promoting open discourse on and examination of relevant conflict variables, peace education can facilitate positive movement toward change in a society … change that would not occur without raising the awareness of the populace.

While space here does not allow for an appropriate examination of the interrelationship between ethnic identity and conflict, it is useful to note that ethnic identity development theory (Phinney, 1993) has posited that one's ethnic identity can grow over time and experience. At the basic 'unexamined ethnic identity' stage of development, categorical ethnic attitudes are automatically adopted without question or exploration and with little room for understanding the identity of 'the other'. In an effort to promote positive movement for youth toward the higher level 'identity development achievement' stage, peace education can facilitate decategorisation of 'the other' and a greater sense of pluralism, which entails looking at the world from different perspectives and accepting other cultures, languages and beliefs.

In societies experiencing inter-ethnic conflict, people are socialised in the context of discourse that is marked by 'mutual delegitimisation and dehumanisation' of 'the other' (Kelman, 1997, p. 210). In these settings, young people learn to see 'the other' in mirror image (i.e. "We are good, they are bad") and are likely to grow up to be adults with a dichotomous "us/them" worldview (Volkan, 1998). This perspective obstructs reconciliation. Reconciliation requires moving from a 'conflictive ethos', where a psychological infrastructure is developed to help the individual/society cope with the adversary, to an 'ethos of peace' where self-protecting ethnocentrism is changed to a more complex, objective sense of self and other (Bar-Tal, 2000). It is through empathy (i.e. the ability to understand the feelings or experience of another) and perspective-taking (i.e. the ability to look at things from different points of view), two skills taught through peace education, that conflict can be transformed toward reconciliation. Peace education seeks to promote on the part of the school learner the knowledge, dispositions and skills needed to live cooperatively in a world where justice, tolerance, civic responsibility and environmental sustainability are valued. Peace education also seeks to develop personal capacities for seeing and negotiating the world in more collaborative ways.

While any effort at peace education represents a step forward in a post-conflict society, it is only when it is systemically integrated as an educational paradigm that it will begin to produce meaningful change. Beyond rights-based content and participatory processes aimed at individual learners, peace education must also engage the broader society and its systems. In a divided society, this means straightforwardly educating citizens about the conflict issues from multiple

perspectives, rather than avoiding them or ethnocentrically consecrating them within each community. Stand alone curricula and generic learning activities that avoid examination of the specific societal conflict issues are bound to fail at educating for sustained peace in regions where only one image of the other has been projected for decades … an image that categorises people's ways of being, thinking and feeling.

The outcome benefits of peace education have been documented in the work of bi-communal youth camps that promote dialogue between youth in divided societies (Ungerleider, Green and McKernon, 1999). Bi-communal peacebuilding youth camp programmes, such as those run by the School for International Training (SIT) in Vermont, epitomise the best of peace education where knowledge is broadened, attitudes are changed and skills in conflict transformation are developed. In these camp programmes, T/C and G/C youth are brought together (typically for the first time ever) and are exposed to meta-perspectives on the 'Cyprus Problem' that transcend the conflict narrative of either community and provide these young people with an expanded base of information about history and the conflict. Participants come away transformed in their understanding of the Cyprus Problem and in their stance toward 'the other', they are more objectively informed, more able to appreciate both sides of the situation and more able to trust (Kosmacher and Orifici, 2002). Through the bi-communal youth camp format, peace education activities strategically promote straightforward exploration of the issues involved in the given societal conflict and thus work to deconstruct the negative power of conflict.

Post-conflict societies suffer under unique challenges when it comes to implementing educational programming that in any way hints at conciliatory recognition of 'the other'. In Northern Ireland for example, nationalistic resistance to social cohesion (on both sides of the divide) has presented significant challenges to the integrated education movement in that divided society (Johnson, 2002). Making any conciliatory move toward 'the other' is seen as treachery, and the conciliator is treated as a 'traitor' to one's home community and cultural identity. The relationship between nationalism and inter-ethnic conflict is well documented in the conflict research literature (Brown, 1997; Cozic, 1994) and indeed has implications in the case of Cyprus. Survey data collected in the spring of 2006 from Greek-Cypriot secondary school students, for example, uncovered nationalistic sentiments as the primary basis for their reluctance to interact with Turkish Cypriots (on the survey, many students supported their position with comments such as "Cyprus is for Greeks"). A recent incident where a group of nationalistic G/C youth attacked T/C youth on the grounds of a school that enrols both G/C and T/C students further underscores the relationship between ethnocentric nationalism and inter-group conflict among youth in Cyprus (Theodoulou, 2006).

Ethno-nationalism presents significant challenges to peace education in any society. While some system-wide educational efforts have been identified in Cyprus, little that is concrete has been operationalised, let alone institutionalised, in terms of new curricula, pedagogy, policy and practice. The Turkish-Cypriot educational system is struggling against so many resource challenges that the notion of peace education has not yet taken form. However, interviews with high level educational authorities in the T/C community during the spring of 2006 suggested that peace education is now being acknowledged (at least verbally) as a natural component of the overall initiative to "build civil society" across all T/C sectors. Membership in the EU has served as an incentive for the G/C Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) to advance directives related to curricular considerations in the areas of educating for democratic citizenship and peace education in the schools (Loizou, 2005). Since EU accession, Cyprus has signed on to a number of these directives ostensibly to align more closely with the "European dimension in education".

A Systemic Framework for Peace Education within Each Community

At this juncture in the history of post-referendum Cyprus, there appears little hope for an integrated or collaborative initiative across the divide that would enjoin both educational systems in an effort to co-educate their youth as a means of promoting mutual understanding and tolerance of differences. Northern Ireland's home-grown efforts to develop an integrated education sector would not be feasible at this time in Cyprus, for many reasons. However, if the respective G/C and T/C communities begin to work within their own educational systems through policy and pedagogy that supports conflict transformation, then the likelihood of developing the human and social capital necessary for sustainable peace will be increased on the island overall. From a systemic perspective, the commitment to pursue peace education, in each system, would require involvement at the levels of policy and leadership, curriculum, pedagogy and teacher training. These are the bedrocks that form the infrastructure necessary for peace education to take hold.

Educational Policy and Leadership

Systemic approaches to peace education must include concerted engagement at multiple levels of the educational enterprise. System-wide strategies, policies and structures need to be established, from the individual school level up through the national ministry. This includes policy and educational leadership that promotes relevant curriculum development and follows through with resource allocation and implementation. At the highest levels of educational policy and leadership, teacher training and pedagogy needs to be reconceptualised and restructured in ways that will further ensure that educators are equipped to promote the knowledge,

dispositions and skills needed for a culture of peace. Critical field research and assessments need to be commissioned. Schools and institutions of teacher training and development need to proactively lobby the central ministries of education for broader inclusion of peace education pedagogy in their professional preparation curricula. Reviews of international models of educational policy and practice need to be incorporated in the planning.

While its efforts were not fully successful, Northern Ireland stands out as a frontrunner, among post-conflict areas, in its action at the national level to address peace education goals in its schools. In Northern Ireland, children are separated from day one: approximately 95 per cent of all children attend single-identity schools, either state controlled (Protestant) or (Catholic) church maintained schools, and as such, they have virtually no cross-community contact or knowledge of each other. Against the backdrop of a fledgling grass-roots movement to establish integrated schools, Northern Ireland enacted the Educational Reform Order of 1989 which, among other directives, implemented the cross-curricular theme of "Educating for Mutual Understanding" (shortened locally to "EMU") as part of its national curriculum. EMU was aimed at assuring that every student in every school would be given opportunities to develop mutual understanding and cross-community contact through any range of relevant activities. While not fully implemented (partially due to the vague specifications and limited funding provided by the Department of Education of Northern Ireland), EMU stands as an example of a state-level curricular initiative taken with peace education aims, under great contention, in a divided society (Church, Johnson and Visser, 2004). Given some of the parallels between the conflict narratives of Cyprus and Northern Ireland, it is interesting to consider whether such a cross-curricular initiative might work in Cyprus. Such an effort, if ever attempted, would need to be a collaborative venture between T/C and G/C educational authorities committed to conjointly providing opportunities through the schools, for seminal cross-community contact and mutual understanding (based perhaps on the bi-communal youth peace camps' format previously mentioned). Given the geopolitical separation and socio-cultural tensions that still define the 'Cyprus Problem' today, this type of collaborative initiative would be difficult, but not impossible, to implement.

Effective implementation of peace education in schools also requires active commitment on the part of the local school leadership. Local schools need to be further empowered if peace education is to be viable. The trend in contemporary educational policy-making and governance is moving toward decentralisation where decisions regarding how schools operate on a practical level are now being placed in the hands of local stakeholders. An intercultural education specialist, Pieter Batelaan (2003) refers to two types of educational management: the first type of school he terms "bureaucratic" which is rule-bound and where quality is mainly

measured by results on exams and new initiatives are kept to a minimum. The second type of school is "entrepreneurial" and is more locally determined and focused on the specific needs of the given community; these schools work "within the framework of legislation but are always looking for some space so that they can set their own goals and take initiatives; … they are more proactive". The trend toward decentralisation provides more opportunities for entrepreneurial-oriented schools; in such schools, the stakeholders discuss goals and methods. This "site-based management" approach to educational policy and decision-making wherein designated members of the school community come together as a planning and managerial body to collaboratively determine standard school operations and address special areas of concern is being promoted in many nations (Abu-Duhuo, 1999). The current management paradigm in both the G/C and T/C systems is highly centralised and bureaucratic in praxis. Until that centralised control is reconfigured, the system offers little incentive or flexibility for creative problem-solving on the local school community level.

While it may take time to get everyone 'on board' ideologically, some form of overt action needs to be taken from the outset by schools if commitment to building a culture of peace is to become more than lip service. As a first step, committed schools can develop and publicise their own 'peace education' mission statement as a means of specifically articulating their collective aim to value cultural differences and to promote respect for all members of the school community. As an outgrowth of the mission statement, an action plan that outlines the goals and strategies of a whole-school initiative can be formulated to serve as a framework to guide efforts over a number of years. This planning presumes that some level of local management prerogatives are in place.

My work in Cyprus included action research and consultation in a secondary school that, since 2003, has enrolled Turkish-Cypriot students among its primarily Greek-Cypriot student population. This school has experienced its share of challenges in making the transition to a bi-communal school. In spite of the distressing difficulties encountered, this school serves as an excellent illustration of how localised problem-solving and planning can be instrumental in educating for a culture of peace. As part of its site-based efforts, an advisory council comprised of representatives from all the major stakeholder groups in the school community (including parents, alumni and students) was established in 2006 as a means of collaboratively developing and implementing a "road map" to guide them over the next three years in an overall initiative to promote tolerance and interdependence across the school community. Since its inception, this advisory council has developed a mission statement, revised its code of conduct, begun work on an anti-harassment policy, surveyed its entire student population to assess attitudes about school climate, and has begun professional development sessions with its entire

faculty aligned to European Union anti-discrimination directives … an ambitious plan of student, parent and staff trainings is expected to emanate from the survey findings and become the focus of the next phase of this brave school's systemic initiative … all centred on promoting a culturally responsive school ethos. Although not without its daily trials, this school has made incredible progress and, in my estimation, its efforts can serve as an exemplar for the practice of peace education in Cyprus. While this school does not fall within the standard public school classification, it is nonetheless an encouraging example of how local energy can be harnessed in promoting peace education.

From an educational leadership perspective, strategies for supporting peace education across all functional aspects of the educational enterprise need to be pursued. School policy and procedures should reflect democratic principles and inclusive practices as a means of modelling the larger world outside. My interviews with teachers, observations in schools, and cursory examination of school policy and procedural frameworks indicated that these concepts have yet to be integrated into educational policy and practice in either educational system. Knowing that the socialising impact of the school experience goes well beyond learning from the explicit curriculum, school management also needs to examine its "hidden curriculum"; that is, everything implicit that impacts student learning from the pictures or images that are displayed on the walls, to the holidays or festivals that are celebrated, to the ways students and teachers interact in the classroom, should speak to the values of equity, mutual respect and interdependence. In Cyprus, the interwoven elements of religion and state are well acknowledged; the Greek Orthodox Church has an unwritten but powerful interaction with all public sector systems, most especially education. I recall talking to a G/C classroom teacher, a doctoral student in education at the time, who admonished me, when I referred to the religious symbols on the classroom walls as representing "the hidden curriculum". He stated that, in G/C schools, "religious iconography is not part of the 'hidden curriculum' at all" … "it is purposeful and definitive" in its presence in the G/C classroom. The significant inter-relationship between education and religion in Cyprus was further reflected by the vehement emotions expressed by students (in a 'school climate' survey conducted in one secondary school) after the religious icons were removed from the walls of their classrooms as a means of culturally accommodating the T/C students who were now enrolling in their school.

While the political influence of the state was much more apparent in the T/C classrooms I visited (for example, pictures of Ataturk and famous military personnel were prominently displayed on the walls), the connection between church and the public education system was not as apparent.

Curricular Initiatives

Curricular development is critical to implementing systemic peace education in a divided society. Rather than relying on longstanding curricula that present ethnocentric perspectives, post-conflict societies need to commit to developing curricula that will expand the range of perspectives that students are exposed to and advance the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for promoting a culture of peace. Beyond developing new curricula, it is important to take system-wide efforts to assess all current texts and teaching materials that are being used in schools as a means of identifying those areas that are serving to perpetuate hegemonic understandings of history, the conflict and the current society. For system-wide change to be instituted, curriculum revision efforts are best made with collaborative involvement across the separate communities.

While education has been influenced by ethno-cultural preservationist goals throughout history, the growing model in contemporary western Europe is to utilise the education system as a medium for promoting students' understanding of their broader rights and responsibilities as citizens in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. There is an increased understanding of the need to develop and foster knowledge, attitudes and skills that will enable young people to play their part in building a more equitable society and interdependent world. As part of this, the Council of Europe officially declared 2005 the "European Year of Citizenship through Education" and thus gave emphasis to Citizen Education as an especially promising vehicle for peace education in divided societies.

In most EU nations, citizenship education (or its local equivalent) typically follows a cross-curricular approach rather than standing as a separate subject (Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2004). As the Republic of Cyprus moved to EU accession, its educational reform efforts were aimed at bringing its educational system into compliance with European Union precepts and standards. Up to this point, citizenship education in Cyprus has been provided through an interdisciplinary approach and is infused into the secondary education subject areas of History, Civics, Greek Literature and Philosophy. In the G/C educational system, civic education is currently incorporated in the curriculum but has for the most part remained traditional in its content coverage and pedagogical methods. That is, contemporary efforts to incorporate diversity, human rights and social justice issues into the national curriculum as part of educating for citizenship have not been apparent in the G/C school system.

In 2003, an expert committee was appointed by the government to make a comprehensive educational reform proposal which led to recommendations issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC). However, these

recommendations were presented to the schools in the G/C system without a mandate for implementation. In its 2003-2004 annual report on General Secondary Education, MOEC (2005) denoted no reference to citizenship education in the curriculum but identified among its educational goals for the 2004-2005 year "developing an active democratic citizen" and "bi-communal cooperation" as part of its post-accession efforts to emphasise Cyprus' role in a United Europe.

Over the past few years, textbooks have also been placed under the educational spotlight given their instrumental role in transmitting the dominant culture worldview to the current generation of learners. In divided states especially, when texts have not been assessed for fair and equitable presentation of information, the student user stands to suffer from a one-sided construction of knowledge. In post-conflict states, educating for a culture of peace requires that textbooks, as primary instruments for learning, be written from an equitable, inclusive and mutually responsive perspective. In 1995, UNESCO declared that textbooks should be cleared of negative stereotypes and, when presenting complex issues, should promote a sense of 'otherness' while offering multiple viewpoints based on scientific facts, not national or cultural background (Pingle, 1999). Textbook revision projects are moving to front stage in several post-conflict societies as part of educational reform efforts to better ensure more balanced and inclusive accounts in the education of youth regarding subject narratives, most commonly in history texts. Educational curricula in post-conflict states need to move away from the traditional monocultural perspective and move toward "multiperspectivity" which recognises that more than one perspective or interpretation may exist in history, especially over large and controversial events, and that because different groups of people see historical events differently, multiple perspectives can be legitimate. The Council of Europe (2004) has provided impetus and guidelines for history textbook revision in this vein. It has been argued that developing multiperspectivity in history curricula is the only way in which controversial issues can be discussed in a peaceful manner. Member states of the EU are increasingly responding to the Council of Europe's call for multiperspectivity in history teaching.

In the Greek-Cypriot educational system, there were efforts initiated in the period leading up to EU accession to review the history curricula and texts; however, in the shadow of the referendum defeat, these efforts have slowed. The revision of history texts or curricula at this time continues to be somewhat contentious. There are nonetheless numbers of educationalists persisting with goals to develop revised texts and teaching guides of Cyprus' history; some of whom are seeking the collaborative input of the Council of Europe regarding best practices for teaching history in pluralistic societies.

In the Turkish-Cypriot educational system, the textbooks in use are developed and published, by and large, in Turkey where targeted efforts have been made to revise educational texts and curricula in line with directives from the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), an independent human rights monitoring body that was established by the Council of Europe (2006). As a result of these efforts, the history texts in use in T/C schools have recently been revised in ways that attempt to "ensure that issues of racism, discrimination and intolerance are adequately addressed".[1]

Conflict resolution education (CRE) is another important curricular component of peace education. CRE seeks to provide members of the school community with conflict resolution knowledge and skills as a means of equipping students to engage in problem-solving methods of addressing conflict in their lives. Skills in active listening, communication, empathy, problem-solving and mediation are all taught as part of CRE. Given the sense of being unfairly wronged and the feelings of righteous indignation that often cloak the psyche of those who live in conflict regions, forgiveness has also been identified as a constructive skill to teach in conflict resolution and peace education. It is interesting to point out that in Northern Ireland, another region which has been scarred by trauma and inter-communal conflict, forgiveness education has been identified as effective in working with children affected by the sectarian strife that still plagues the neighbourhoods of Belfast (Enright, Gassin and Knutson, 2003).

While there are many methods and modes of providing CRE in schools, best practice involves integrating CRE into and across the curriculum. While the concept of conflict resolution is certainly not new to Cypriots, it has never been implemented in the schools nor has it been part of the teacher education curriculum (see related discussion below). Most recently, a pilot offering of CRE was provided to G/C teachers and counsellors, at both the University of Cyprus and the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus, with very positive reception on the part of the participants who expressed great need for this type of training in their work. Current discussions are being held regarding continuing CRE in the teacher education curriculum. Likewise, positive advances in relation to preparing teachers in CRE are beginning in the T/C educational system (see discussion below).

Teacher Training and Pedagogy

Classroom teachers in divided societies commonly come from single-identity backgrounds through which they have had little exposure to pluralistic worldviews (Johnson, 2002). This reality alone underscores the need for training teachers in divided societies in ways that will expand their knowledge, attitudes and skills in the areas of cultural diversity, tolerance, interculturalism and social justice. Training

teachers to be equipped to practice effectively within a peace education framework is an essential part of building the infrastructure needed for success of outcomes. This view of teacher education reflects the notion of "social reconstructionism", which conceptualises teachers as "key agents" in the process of "achieving equality and justice in society at large" (Furlong, 1992, p. 167).

Teachers need to be trained in the new pedagogy that fosters the development of cooperation, dialogue and mutual understanding among students. Discussion-oriented and group methodologies are central to facilitating a climate in the classroom that is responsive to diversity. Cooperative learning (Johnson and Johnson, 1989), as an instructional paradigm that fosters interdependence, equity and inter-group relations while honing critical thinking skills, has been widely incorporated into peace education models. Cooperative learning emphasises opportunities that promote positive interdependence rather than competition among students. Such pedagogy has significant potential for offering students skills in being able to negotiate different perspectives. Through cooperative learning methods, students come to understand that it is to their advantage for other students to do well and to their disadvantage for others to do poorly (Johnson and Johnson, 1994) thus removing the competitive incentives all too often promoted in schools. Recently trained teachers entering the G/C system increasingly have been exposed to (and at varying degrees are employing) cooperative learning strategies, most especially at the elementary school level. The G/C classroom teachers who were interviewed however indicated that there is little emphasis being placed on bringing all teachers up to standards in this methodology. In the T/C system, the teachers I interviewed were comparatively unaware of cooperative learning methodology overall, and when explained its basic precepts, they seemed quite certain it would never work in their classrooms where they report a rather set caste-system is in place (children of military personnel holding top 'status', followed by native born T/C's, and then immigrants and 'settlers' from mainland Turkey holding lowest minority status). The biases and entitlements these teachers see at work between these groupings make social cohesion in the classroom setting, in their estimation, unlikely.

Pedagogical methods that foster critical thinking, debate, conflict resolution, tolerance-building, problem-solving and social responsibility, all of which are necessary for learning to live successfully in a pluralist society, can be creatively incorporated throughout most subjects and co-curricular activities. Some of these methods include "Circle Time" which promotes small group discussion on structured topics at the primary level; and at the secondary level, strategies can be included such as "Academic Controversy" or "Constructive Controversy", both of which help to build student competence in making decisions about difficult issues (often involving ethnic, cultural or religious differences) and perspective-taking (Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, 1998).

Delimited efforts are currently being undertaken in both the T/C and the G/C educational systems of Cyprus, to train teachers in interculturalism and anti-discrimination pedagogy. However, systemic commitment toward implementing policy and curriculum statutes in teacher and counsellor education in these areas has not yet taken form. Teacher interviews, most especially in the T/C community, consistently uncovered strong expressions of need for more training in the areas broadly considered to be peace education (e.g. anti-discrimination, conflict resolution, harassment and bullying intervention, mediation procedures).

To be effective, the professional training of teachers must engage learning at the cognitive, affective and psychosocial levels in order to assure that not only subject content and methodology is gained but that the personal dispositions and skills needed to promote peace pedagogy in the school will be acquired. I have come across many teachers in both Cyprus and Northern Ireland who, given the sociocultural ethos that prevails in these regions, feel unable or uncomfortable to respond effectively when sensitive issues of race, ethnicity, political or religious differences are raised in the classroom. A fundamental goal of peace pedagogy is to be able to address differences in constructive ways … this requires openness, empathy and tolerance on the part of the teacher. Fortunately, as has been demonstrated in other contexts and situations, these traits can be taught … and learned (French, 2005; Jones, 2005)!

Since accession to the EU, educators in Cyprus have been trying to determine how best to align with a European future at the same time respecting cultural heritage and national identity. Accordingly, the notion of educating teachers 'for a new world' is slowly entering the professional education discourse. Teacher training in the areas of multiculturalism, tolerance, human rights, conflict resolution and social justice however has not been a systemically recognised goal. In response to historical divisions, Phtiaka (2002) argued that teacher education in Cyprus "needs to concentrate on the future" by educating teachers to cultivate in themselves and pass on to their pupils a deep knowledge of history, a broad social conscience, tolerance towards all kinds of differences, a good knowledge of the Turkish-Cypriot people and culture as well as knowledge of other peoples and their cultures, and a deep commitment to social justice (ibid., pp. 362-363). While professional commitment to these goals is worthy, development of these competencies should not be left up to teachers themselves to cultivate; it is the responsibility of the universities and institutes that are commissioned by the state to provide professional preparation and training for teachers and counsellors to make sure that these areas are included in the training curricula as part of carrying out their responsibility to prepare a responsible citizenry for living in a democratic society.

While initial exploration of these areas occurred in teacher training forums in the years just prior to EU accession, committed efforts have slowed a bit in reaction to

the referendum defeat. Nonetheless, there are encouraging indications that relevant curricular modules and learning activities are being offered through both pre-service and in-service training. As an example of this, I was invited to develop and teach modules on conflict transformation to both post-graduate students at the University of Cyprus and in-service teachers at the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus. As a result of the positive feedback from the participants, both institutions are considering the benefits of incorporating these training frameworks into teacher education curricula in the future.

The T/C educational system has also been slow in recognising the need for peace education principles and practices to be incorporated into teacher training. Pre-service education for many teachers in the Turkish-Cypriot school system takes place in Turkey and, as such, is not necessarily tuned to the local needs of the Cypriot schools in which they will eventually teach. Consequently, there is a great ongoing need for in-service and continuing education for these teachers.

I have interviewed teachers in the north of Cyprus who find themselves ill-equipped to teach in the classroom with an average of thirty-five students, having no idea as to how to manage the conflicts and in some cases violent eruptions that break out in class. These teachers now have to address matters of inter-group prejudice and racism, not so much related to the TC/GC conflict, but rather in response to biases demonstrated among and against settlers, immigrant and military children. These teachers are hungry for skill and strategy development in the areas of conflict resolution and anti-racism education. Recent discussions between local Turkish-Cypriot educators, community groups, and the educational authorities have generated positive movement toward this end. As an outcome of these discussions, a 'train the trainers' initiative has been explored for implementation whereby a cadre of classroom teachers, school counsellors and psychologists would be trained in peace education principles and practices to then go back to their respective schools and train the other school personnel in these principles and methods. This is a groundbreaking effort that holds sustainable promise. Another indication of interest in peace education in the Turkish-Cypriot educational system has emerged recently at the higher education level where, at Eastern Mediterranean University in Famagusta, plans are in place to open an academic specialisation in conflict resolution as part of their international relations programme (personal communication with Professor Erol Kaymak, EMU, 23 January 2006).

Conclusion

In post-conflict societies like Cyprus, peacebuilding efforts are typically met with great resistance from those who want to retain the status quo in the name of preserving cultural heritage, national identity and security. In these societies, any

effort to implement peace education requires sensitivity to the nuances that define the given conflict, the politics and the cultural groups in that unique context; there is no "one size fits all" model for educating for a culture of peace in broken societies. Certainly, this paper is only intended to scratch the surface of some of the areas of relevant consideration.

While there has been little in the way of empirical studies that validate the long-term outcomes of peace education initiatives, the educational research literature is replete with indications that peace education can play a meaningful role in inter-group conflict resolution and reconciliation. In divided societies, the truth often is that citizens are so entrenched in their own respective sociopolitical identity that any progressive call for education to undertake strategic efforts to promote different ways of knowing and being on the part of the nation's youth falls on deaf, if not resistant, ears. It is not so much the notion of promoting peace across cultural groups that invokes the resistance, as much as the fear of what promoting peace across sociopolitical lines will mean in terms of loss of identity and hegemony (Duffy, 2000). The pursuit of social cohesion between peoples who have been engaged in protracted inter-ethnic conflict, where social identity needs compound with significant political, value and power differentials, is a process fraught with obstacles (French, 2005). Peace education presents a particular challenge in Cyprus where the respective G/C and T/C communities have identity-based views about the role of education. As is the case in Northern Ireland, much of the problem occurs not in the schools but in the home where young people acquire the ethno-politically entrenched opinions of their parents (Duffy, 2000). A dynamic form of peace education that engages the family and the community in the process is therefore imperative.

This article has attempted to discuss the concept of peace education as a pathway to reconciliation in divided societies; specifically it has attempted to examine the primary components of implementing peace education in Cyprus, taking into account the educational systems of both of its communities, Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot, and making note where useful of comparative efforts in Northern Ireland, another divided society. The fact that Cyprus is a segregated society with completely separate school systems reflecting significant cultural and language differences, seemingly makes the prospect of an integrated or island-wide peace education initiative untenable. Thus, peace education in Cyprus, for now, needs to be pursued within each system in ways that will promote new ways of thinking and being among the members of its own community (see discussion on single-identity conflict resolution strategies in Church, Johnson and Visser, 2004) and, at the same time, open doors for collaborative efforts to bridge between both systems where feasible (such as in cross-community contact schemes). Recent accession to the EU for Cyprus, and current efforts by Turkey to qualify for

admission to the EU, allow for some hope that improved articulation between the G/C and T/C educational systems might be feasible in the future. The establishment of an integrated school in Nicosia and ongoing efforts at third level educational institutions in both communities to incorporate inter-culturalism, conflict resolution and anti-bias education into their curricula are steps in the right direction.

It is quite clear that there are both longstanding challenges as well as recent prospects at work in today's Cyprus that simultaneously are colouring the feasibility of educating for peace within and between its two primary communities. For peace education to meaningfully effect social change, it will need to be a collective venture (both within and between communities) that transcends the individual perspective and sociocultural assumptions while still incorporating the contextual variables that touch upon individuals' lives. Individuals and systems will need to take risks and openly engage in dialogue that works to examine the constructs of conflict in their life and operations. For it to work, peace education needs to be systemically embraced from the "bottom up" and "top down". Every aspect of the educational enterprise, from policy to curriculum to pedagogy, needs to be a part of the infrastructure. All civil society stakeholders (including schools, universities and training institutions, teachers, students, unions, parents, community organisations, private and public sector employers, policy-makers and government agencies) need to be collaboratively engaged in the process. The populace needs to see it as a worthy and necessary endeavour for the betterment of their society, most especially for the betterment of the children of their society who will live in a globalised world much different than the one they have known in previous generations.

Presenting initially as fearful territory, peace education requires that individual citizens take a step back and ask themselves, "What are the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes most important to impart for the next generation?" At the end of the day, this societal imperative is no different in Cyprus than in other settings. Peace education is not a panacea, only a pathway to a brighter future for our children.

Note

1. The Council of Europe's 'Third Report on Turkey' (2006) reported that its independent human rights monitoring body, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), was informed by the Turkish authorities that they have set up human rights education courses and have improved those already existing at all levels of the education system. These courses are taught as part of civics courses, which also ensure

that pupils learn about democracy. ECRI monitors whether school textbooks and official examination subjects may convey negative views of some minority groups, particularly Armenians. The authorities have informed ECRI that they are currently revising textbooks with a view to removing all references which are xenophobic, contrary to human rights or convey negative representations of certain minority groups. ECRI also notes that, alongside this initiative, a civil society group also concerns itself with identifying all prejudices and negative stereotypes in school textbooks.

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