

Peace Education in the 21st century

Peter Becker Award for Peace and Conflict Studies, Marburg, May 2011

Laudatory speech

I want to head this laudatory speech with the title „Peace Education in the 21st Century“. This is because I’m firmly convinced that the three awardees make extremely prominent contributions to establish a modern Peace Education in this century. As we all know Peace Education is not a single entity and there are wide differences in regard to the definition of “Peace Education”. There is no uniform concept of Peace Education, neither in research nor in practice, not in particular countries or societies and even less on the international level. Therefore I felt totally enthusiastic when I heard that the jury has decided to honour Prof. Gavi Salomon with the Peter Becker Award. Since many years he is the only one who tells theorists and practitioners alike to look for more conceptual clarity.

We have to praise the lifework of Gavriel Salomon on five levels:

1. Gavi Salomon as a *scientist*, who gives valuable theoretical inputs based on his analysis regarding different types of encounters between Israeli and Palastinian people;
2. Gavi Salomon as a *encouraging person*, who never doubt that the world needs Peace Education and that Peace Education can make the difference;
3. Gavi Salomon as a *voice calling out in the desert*, making clear that there are small limits for all efforts of Peace Education;
4. Gavi Salomon as a *teacher*, who finds reasonable – sometimes provocative - words to reach hearts and minds of his audience;
5. Gavi Salomon as a *long-distance runner* who never loses sight of the goal end.

For all these reasons he is our today’s first awardee.

1. „Conceptual clarity is needed“: Gavriel Salomon, University of Haifa

I still remember very well my encounter with Gavriel Salomon in February 2004. The occasion was the International Expert Meeting „Promote Peace Education around the World“ near Munich. Two years earlier, his book „Peace Education. The Concept, Principles, and Practices Around the World“ was published - edited together with Baruch Nevo. In a very short article Gavi Salomon stressed the need of Peace Education, but at the same time he called for more analysis and conceptual thinking and suggested that peace educational approaches have to be assigned to different socio-political contexts. A plausible but provocative proposal. Because some feared that along with this contextualization Gavi Salomon suggested a specific valuation. So I was curious to see how and with what arguments Gavriel Salomon would present his ideas. Let me be clear: I was impressed by the first minute of the distinctive combination of contentual preciseness and deep personal concern. This combination can be called „authentic“ and you won't meet this virtue even in peace educational conferences commonly.

Since that encounter the workings of Gavriel Salomon have enriched the Institute for Peace Education in Tuebingen. Modern Peace Education is not conceivable without Salomon. Not only his papers are part of the fundamentals of my Peace Education seminar at the University of Tuebingen, but we also use a video interview, which we recorded during that conference. Gavriel Salomon has not only to be read but must be heard and seen. Personality and research work are two sides of the same coin, especially when it comes to the issue of Peace Education. What luck that Gavriel Salomon is here today and you may experience him personally.

In the following I would like to single out two aspects of the work of Gavriel Salomon, which I consider as very important for the theoretical and practical development of Peace Education.

1. „The three contexts and the prototype of Peace Education“

As many of you know Gavriel Salomon made a very important differentiation concerning the programs of Peace Education. He distinguished between three sociopolitical contexts in which such programmes take place:

1. Contexts of belligerent ethnopolitical conflicts (intractable conflicts)

2. Conflicts of nonviolent intergroup tension involving issues such as immigration
3. Contexts of relative tranquillity. (2010: 3)

In his point of view Peace Education in regions of intractable conflict differs from Peace Education in the other contexts and of course from education for interpersonal conflict resolution as conceptualized and practiced in schools. This is because Peace Education in the first context of intractable conflict „has to do with making peace with a real enemy, with somebody you really hate, who really threatens you.“ (2004: 10)

For him there are a few typical characteristics of intractable conflicts:

- the conflicts are not only between individuals but rather between collectives
- the conflicts are deeply rooted in each side’s collective narrative, the story each side tells about itself
- the conflicts face the challenge of deeply rooted beliefs

In these conflicts, Salomon argued, there is a basic problem: The deligitimization of the other’s side perspective. So the ultimate purpose of Peace Education is to make people give legitimacy to the other’s side perspective. And, as Salomon wrote in 2002, Peace Education designed for the first context has a paradigmatic character for the entire Peace Education field, as it covers the superordinate principles and practices which are also of significance under the other conditions.

Gavriel Salomon always pointed out that there are transitions between the contexts and between the other topics close to Peace Education as conflict resolution, human rights education etc. He argues that „conceptual clarity as to the basic nature of peace education and its varieties is needed, as only in the light of this it is possible to ascertain how experience and research of one category of programs can usefully inform the design and execution of programs in other categories.“ (2002: 12)

The distinction of three contexts had an eye-opening effect for many people and I consider it as very important and valuable. At the same time, this differentiation provokes. Because it raises the question whether one sort of peace education is more valuable than the other.

Gavriel Salomon is aware of this problem and he perceives it as a challenge to develop peace education further in theory and practice. Therefore, he together with Ed Cain, has initiated a

discussion in his currently published "Handbook on Peace Education" to which I would like to draw attention at this point. It is about the search for the core respectively a prototype of Peace Education.

It is the consequence of thinking and analysis of Salomon's work when he argued that as a result of his experiences and analysis the prototype of peace education is located in the context of tension, threat, conflict.

„Peace education in the context of conflict and tension can be characterized as follows:

1. It is edopsychologically rather than political oriented;
2. It addresses primarily ways of relating to a threatening adversary;
3. It focuses on intergroup more than interpersonal relations
4. It aims at changing hearts and minds with respect to an adversary involved in a particula conflict.“

(...)

„What does this mean for the other kinds of Peace Education, those that do not fit the prototype? Clearly, they are not relegated to second-class status; they are bona fide approaches to peace education that are similar to the prototype but differ from it in some important ways. (...) For example, conflict resolution in the classroom could be prototypical of the category ‘interpersonal nonviolence‘, where peace education, as discussed here, would have only partial family resemblance with ist prototype. There is no need to think of peace education approaches as belonging to one and only one category. For example, education for democracy could easily be regarded as a variant of the prototype of peace education and at the same time the prototype of the category of civil education and so on.“ (2010: 5f.)

Searching for a prototype of Peace Education Salomon has launched a central discussion. This raises the question whether it might be useful to identify one prototype for each of the three contexts mentioned. This would offer a constructive analysis of the key approaches of Peace Education, for example in Germany or Japan, and encourage comparative studies. I hope that this award is an impetus to the development of Salomon's considerations with emphasis on a national and especially on the international level.

2. „*The Value of Studying a distant conflict*“

Gavriel Salomon's work offers further valuable hints related to the practice of Peace Education. Some we used for the design of our project "Peace Counts on Tour". This example shows not only the interaction between theory and practice, but also between the former and latest laureates of the Peter Becker Award for Peace and Conflict Studies .

As many of you probably know, this project is a combination of the exhibition "Peace Builders Around the World" and a peace educational workshop. It's about translating best practice examples of worldwide peacebuilding into educational settings that they allow common learning through different conflicts and conflict transformation in all of the three contexts Salomon described - especially in intractable. Gavriel Salomon's work gives eye-opening answers exactly to this challenge. Together with his colleague Haggai Kupermintz he wrote:

„One of the goals often formulated for peace education is to study the conflict and the positions of the other side. Indeed, coming to grips with the adversary's perspective, trying to step into its shoes, legitimizing its narrative and identity, and developing some empathy for its plight are important goals for peace education. However, intuition and experience suggest that, in the context of an intractable conflict, presenting the other side's perspective is most likely to arouse strong resistance. This is the case because one of the effects of an intractable conflict is the development of a tunnel vision (...).“ (2005: 296)

For Salomon the question about „the Value of Studying a distant conflict“ is an very important one. So he discussed the effects of a program with Israeli-Jewish students. This programme included the study of a totally foreign conflict to support the understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Reflecting these and other results of comparable peace educational programmes Salomon and Kupermintz argued:

„It became evident that where the program participants appeared to be able to step into the Palestinian shoes, those who did not participate in the program (the control group) were unable to do the same. (...) It appears that the study of the foreign conflict afforded the opportunity to engage in a process of rising to a

bird's eye view of the two-sidedness of a conflict, then applying the constructed abstraction to the local conflict. The feared resistance was thus circumvented by allowing the students to approach the emotionally loaded local conflict from a more universal, possibly more abstract perspective.“ (2005: 296)

This is exactly the way PCoT works. Just for a better understanding: Peace Counts is a unique combination of Peace Education and Peace Journalism worldwide. It started as an initiative of journalists who traveled to more than 30 conflict regions to report on successful examples of peacebuilding. The reports were published in the media and used for the creation of an exhibition called „Peacebuilders around the world“. This combination of large scale photographs and journalistic reports showing how individuals can make peace is the core element of Peace Counts. It is accompanied by a peace education training program which uses specifically adapted multimedia materials and a Peace Education Package. The training program has been organized in Germany as well as in seven other countries on four continents between 2007-2009: Sri Lanka, Macedonia, Cote d'Ivoire, the Philippines, Russia, India and Colombia. Its central aim is to train students and multipliers in the identification of causes and escalation of violent conflict and to direct their focus and action towards alternative ways of acting and peaceful solutions. The best-practice examples of successful peacebuilding are meant to inspire people so that they feel encouraged to take responsibility for acting towards peace in their own region or country.

It's a great challenge, not only to discuss the additional value of working with „foreign conflicts“, but also with „best-practice examples from other regions affected by conflict“. Taking into consideration Salomon's research is also a perfect set-up for peace educational practice. I am sure many times over mutual inspiration will be arise. This Becker Prize Award should and can contribute to.

2. „Provide emotional support“: Day Care Center for Arab and Jewish Children at Risk, Jaffa

The importance of emotions is another prominent topic in the work of Gavriel Salomon. Basic emotions and needs is also an important topic of our second awardee: the Day Care Center for Arab and Jewish Children at Risk, Jaffa.

In the profile of the second laureate we can read the following description:

„The Day Care Center for Arab and Jewish Children at Risk is an after-school program based on a unique therapeutic model developed in collaboration with the Children and Youth Care Research Unit of the Tel Aviv University School of Social Work. Now in its sixth year, the Day Care Center meets the needs of more than 50 Jewish, Muslim and Christian children aged 6-14 (1st-8th grades), who are split into four groups, according to age. The children come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and many have learning disabilities and lack social skills. The program places a great deal of emphasis on helping each child strive for and achieve excellence, while granting particular attention to developing their social and academic skills.“

A peace prize for the support of 50 children only? A few people may be doubtful. As we all know there are always sceptic people in science and society. Maybe they remember the percussive dates which are listed in the recent Education for All Global Monitoring Report. The topic „The Hidden Crises: Armed Conflict and Education“. There we read that 67 million children worldwide still have not the opportunity to go to school. The relationship between war and lack of education is obvious: 28 million of these children live in 20 countries with conflict and post conflict situations.

And now: a peace prize for the care of 50 children? Yes, there is no doubt that the jury really made a wonderful decision. Because each single child is important if we are trying to build a culture of peace - worldwide and in every single country. Maria Montessori, the famous educator and co-founder of peace education in Europe, has taught us how fundamental striving for each child is. Without love and sense of belonging and security it is not possible for children to develop the necessary self-confidence to survive in a non-peaceful environment. And without self-confidence there is little chance for empathy and without empathy a really living together in peace will not be possible. Exactly this is the approach of The Day Care Center and we can all be thankful that there are colleagues who dedicate themselves with so much commitment and competence in this difficult task.

The two most important objectives of the The Day Care Center are very challenging. They make clear the connection between individual support and peace in the world:

- Provide emotional support and attention to each child according to his/her individual needs, in an open, non-labeling environment;
- Develop patterns of non-violent behavior and grant tools that aid in coping with aggressive and violent situations.

We must not forget that the precondition for any form of peace education is to ensure the safety of children and consideration of their basic needs.

On the long-run, Peace Education will only be credible if a basic education for all is provided (Stephanie Schell-Faucon).

3. „Replace the violent dialogue with the culture of peace“: Sapir Handelman (Minds of Peace Experiment)

In February this year Israelis and Palestinians gathered in Clayton for a three-day exercise in which they worked to develop a peace agreement. This event took place as the 12th Minds of Peace Experiment, a „small-scale Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congress“. Afterwards the participants, including five Israelis and five Palestinians of varying ages and backgrounds, addressed a variety of issues. Among their initial agreements:

- A two-state solution is needed.
- Incitement must be stopped in favour of promoting the language of peace.
- A compromise on the freedom of movement is needed.
- Security is needed.
- Both sides should engage in joint projects to promote a culture of peace.

Sapir Handelman, the third co-laureate of the 2010 Peter Becker Award for Peace and Conflict Studies, was one of the moderators of this encounter. As mentioned before Sapir founded the organization Minds of Peace in 2009 based on his concepts of conflict resolution in intractable conflicts. Today he is the Chairman of the Board of Minds of Peace and visiting assistant professor at The Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at Wayne State University, Detroit, USA.

„Dr. Handelman is a pioneer in people-to-people grass roots diplomacy between Israelis and Palestinians. His “Mind of Peace” dialogues have now been held in several locations, including at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Wayne State University Detroit, University of California at Irvine, and in Beit Jala/Beit Lehem in Israel/Palestine on August 29, 2009. The concept of citizen-based diplomacy is meant to supplement and extend efforts at the leadership level so that the public comes to identify with and gain trust in peacemaking efforts.“

„In the Mind of Peace Experiment, teams of 5-6 local Israelis and Palestinians from all walks of life come together over 3 days for constructive future-oriented negotiation of agreements to end violence and solve underlying conflict issues. The talks proceed with an open community audience, which can also enter the conversation during the last portion of each session. In the sessions at Beit Jala the Israeli panel included a father whose daughter was killed in the conflict and a former director of a jail for political prisoners. The Palestinian delegation included an ex-prisoner from that jail and a gun shot victim.“

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Unfortunately it was not possible for me to study Sapir Handelman’s new book. The title is "About the Conflict and Peacemaking in Israel-Palestine: Theory and Application ". Another book on the Middle East conflict? You know, I just mentioned the people who are always critical. Yes, one more of his many books on the Middle East conflict. But it must be a special one. I got an impression - not of the book, but of Sapir Handelman. In our media age, it was no problem to find a video interview in the Internet. He spoke with his Palestinian partner Mazen Badra about the mentioned 12th experiment. And he told in a refreshing way about his vision: the vision of a democratic peace in Israel, which is important to develop together in a long process.

„Our ultimate goal is to replace the violent dialogue with the culture of peace“, Handelman said, and he added: „Activism is my moral obligation.“

I am really looking forward to the encounter with Sapir Handelmann.

4. Peace Education in the 21th century

„Peace Education work in crisis and conflict areas actually does help to make hostile groups more peaceable in their attitudes towards one another“. This is one of the results of a recent research project at Heidelberg University’s Institute for Educational Studies. Let’s be optimistic. The international exchange on Peace Education is still in its infancy. We have learned that there have to be taken into account the respective social, political, economical and cultural contexts, and also be aware of various traditions, historical embeddings and different levels of intensity of practice and systematic debate on peace education. International networks such as the “Global Campaign for Peace Education of the Hague Appeal for Peace” or the “Peace Education Commission (PEC)” as well as comparative studies of international peace educational approaches and projects in the context of development cooperation to foster the evolvement of a shared understanding of Peace Education.

Peace Education counts on the learning ability of human beings. It focuses on the acquisition and advancement of capacities, skills, values and knowledge contributing to the establishment of a global and sustainable culture of peace. Peace Education comprises all stages of life and socialization of human beings. From Gavriel we have learned that its context is specific, but it is feasible and essential in every world region and all stages of conflict, too.

In a global perspective Peace Education in the 21st century has to be a multi-track Peace Education. The experience shows that for sustainable Peace Education actors on different levels have to be involved. Peace Education designs learning spaces for multipliers, teachers, journalists, NGO staff, members of conflicting parties or leaders in society and politics to support the development of peace structures and a “culture of peace”. This includes the set-up of conflict sensitive educational systems preventing the misuse of educational institutions for manipulation, falsification of history or education towards hate and violence. The development and establishment of curricula for Peace Education as a contribution to capacity building of societies is one of the most pressing global tasks of international Peace Education.

As mentioned before the three awardees are essential for the development of theory and practice of modern Peace Education.

Hopefully I could illustrate the importance of the three awardees. Thanks and congratulations to the jury for their prospective decision. I am sure that not only we all can learn a lot from the winners but also the three winners from each other. They all contribute to making Peace Education in the 21st Century not only attractive but also successful. Quite rightly Gavriel Salomon is focussed in this award - because of his immense experience and his life's work. So once again I want to thank Gavi Salomon as a great personality: as scientist, as encouraging person, as voice calling out in the desert, teacher and long-distance runner.

References

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