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### **UNITY-BASED PEACE EDUCATION:**

#### **A NEW APPROACH TO PEACE EDUCATION BY TRANSFORMING WORLDVIEWS**

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### **Abstract**

Despite the numerous efforts to prevent, manage and/or resolve conflicts and violence, they only seem to be increasing in frequency and intensity in our life. It appears that the methods we are using are not sufficient to prevent conflicts and create a sustainable culture of peace in the inner, interpersonal, inter-group, and international life of humanity. It may be that the time has come to create global peace-based worldviews and to teach it at schools, in order to overcome this situation of fragmentation. Current approaches to peace education tend to focus rather on specific issues or themes and leave many broader questions about the nature of peace and transformative role of worldviews in peace education and vice versa. Such a transformation requires an integrative view of peace as a psychosocial, political, moral and spiritual condition, and depends not merely upon reducing conflict but on actively creating unity. Unity-Based Peace Education program offers this kind of approach and proposes the education for peace curriculum developed on integrative peace-based worldview. This paper aims to present the program called 'Education for Peace' (EFP) which has demonstrated transformative results in post-conflict societies of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

### **Introduction**

During this past century, we have witnessed rapid and spontaneous changes of world economic, political, social, cultural, technological affairs that led to growth in social concern about horrific forms of violence, like ecocide, genocide, modern warfare, ethnic hatred, racism, sexual abuse and domestic violence. As a result, we feel isolated and fragmented and we don't feel at home. Perplexed by the pervasiveness of conflict in human affairs, many have either convinced themselves to the belief that conflict represents an inherent aspect of our human nature and constitutes an inevitable feature of human life<sup>1</sup> or have remained undecided on the matter whether to concede that all individuals and societies will continue to be capsulated by conflict<sup>2</sup>, or to entertain the hope that transformation in the present character of human life is possible.<sup>3</sup>

As for UNICEF, its Peace Education Working Group defines peace education as “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, intergroup, national or international level”.<sup>4</sup>

Hossain Danesh and Roshan Danesh, on the other hand, offer a unique model of Education for Peace which is formulated within the framework of a peace-oriented worldview: a positive, transformative vision distinguished by the recognition of the oneness of humanity and the earth, the fundamental importance of unity-in-diversity, the application of standards of justice and equality, and the practice of unified non-adversarial decision-making and conflict resolution.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, only by constructing consciously a worldview that leads to a transformation in the root character of human life can resolve the innumerable conflicts of our present time that are directly or indirectly related to fragmentation. Though the pursuit of such a goal may seem perplexing,

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<sup>1</sup> M.R. Van Slyck, Stern, M., and Elbedour, S. (1999). Adolescents' beliefs about their conflict behaviour. In A. Raviv, L. Oppenheimer, and D. Bar-Tal (Eds.), *How Children Understand War and Peace* (pp. 208-230). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Salomon, G. (2003). *Does peace education make a difference?* Paper presented at the André Salama Workshop for Research on Peace Education, University of Haifa, Center for Research on Peace Education; Tal-Or, N., Boninger, D., and Gleicher, F. (2002). Understanding the Conditions and Processes Necessary for Intergroup Contact to Reduce Prejudice. In G. Salomon and B. Nevo (Eds.), *Peace Education, The Concept, Principles, and Practices Around the World*. (pp. 89-108). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Bar-Tal, D. (2002). The elusive nature of peace education. In G. Salomon and B. Nevo (Eds.), *Peace education: The concept, principles and practices in the world* (pp. 27-36). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum; Evans, D. (1999). A Curriculum Framework for Peace Education. *Educational Innovation and Information*, 100, 1-7. Geneva: International Bureau of Education.; Reardon, Betty. (2001). *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*. UNESCO: Geneva. (pp.5-197).

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO (2002) *UNESCO: IBE Education Thesaurus* (6th edn) (Geneva, UNESCO International Bureau of Education), p.6.

<sup>5</sup> H.B. Danesh (2008). Unity-Based peace education. In *Encyclopedia of Peace Education*, Teachers College, Columbia University, <http://www.tc.edu/centers/epe/>.

vague and idealistic to many, a unique and systematic effort in the field of peace education seems promising and yielding positive results.

Part I of this paper reviews current approaches and limitations in the field of peace education. Part II focuses on the need for a radical shift in our worldview in peace education programs from conflict-based to unity-based worldviews. Part III presents the philosophy, methodology and results of the EFP pilot program in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Part IV discusses the implications of this experiment for the further development of peace education theory and practice.

### **Part I: Current Approaches to and Limitations of Peace Education**

Among the various approaches to peace education<sup>6</sup>, Ian Harris and Mary Lee Morrison identify the following five major trends: human rights education, environmental education, international education, conflict resolution education and development education.<sup>7</sup> Salomon, however, asserts that the peace education's primary concern should be reconciliation of society, protection of human rights or development of peace skills.<sup>8</sup>

Issues of pedagogy are also central to peace education. Daniel Bar-Tal argues, for example, that the objectives of peace education are markedly different from traditional educational objectives and require a different pedagogy. Implications for peace education pedagogy include the following.<sup>9</sup>

Betty A. Reardon classifies two main trends in peace education: education *for* peace and education *about* peace. She writes that “for some peace education falls under in the realm of international education (later global education and/or world studies), for others under the form of multicultural education, and for some more recent efforts it evolves from environmental education.”<sup>10</sup> Each has its own respective disciplines, which are international relations, cultural anthropology and environmental sciences. Each of these approaches, she says, “also would fall into the area of ‘education for peace’, that is education to create some of the preconditions for the achievement of peace”.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See Bar-Tal, D.(2002). The elusive nature of peace education; Groff, L., and Smoker, P. (1996). Creating global-local cultures of peace. *Peace and Conflict Studies Journal*, 3, (June); I.M. Harris. (1996). From world peace to peace in the “hood”. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education*, 2, 378-395; M.L. Johnson, (1998). Trends in peace education. ERIC Digest. ED417123.

<sup>7</sup> I. M. Harris, & M. L. Morrison, (2003). *Peace education* (2nd edn) (Jefferson, NC, McFarland &Co.).

<sup>8</sup> G. Salomon (2002). The nature of peace education: not all programs are created equal, in: G. Salomon & B. Nevo (Eds) *Peace education: the concept, principles, and practices around the world* (London, Lawrence Erlbaum), 3–36.

<sup>9</sup> D. Bar-Tal. (2002) The elusive nature of peace education, in: G. Salomon & B. Nevo (Eds) *Peace education: the concept, principles, and practices around the world* (London, Lawrence Erlbaum), 27–36.

<sup>10</sup> Betty A. Reardon. (2000). Peace education: A Review and protection. In Bob Moon, Sally Brown and Miriam Ben Peretz (Eds)., *International Companion to Education*, (pp. 397-424). New York: Routledge, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Other approaches to peace education might be called ‘education about peace’<sup>12</sup>, education for the development and practice of institutions and processes that comprise a peaceful social order. These approaches include conflict resolution training, human rights education, and peace studies, which as practiced in elementary and secondary schools, and they are generally called as ‘peace education’. It represents a more narrow and traditional view of the field.<sup>13</sup>

Sara Clarke-Habibi classifies the most common variations of peace education in three:<sup>14</sup> 1) Peace education as conflict resolution training<sup>15</sup>: Approaches of this type aim to change negative beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors about conflict as a basis for preventing violence.<sup>16</sup> 2) Peace education as democracy education: Based on democratic peace theory’s assumption on democracy decreases the likelihood of violence and war, it “focuses on to train participants in the skills of critical thinking, debate and coalition-building, and promote the values of freedom of speech, individuality, and tolerance of diversity, compromise and conscientious objection. It is assumed that these are the same skills necessary for creating a culture of peace.”<sup>17</sup> 3) Peace education as human rights awareness training: It assumes that humanity needs to adopt policies that would foster to move to a peaceful global community. Approaches of this type familiarize participants with the international agreements and declarations of the United Nations system; train students to recognize violations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and promote tolerance, solidarity, autonomy and self-affirmation at the individual and collective levels.<sup>18</sup>

Based on this brief review, it seems that the question still remains open whether we are only gathering a bunch of values without really engaging in creating an effective conceptual and methodological framework to move from conflict-based to peace (unity)-based worldview.

Indeed, the primary challenge lies in that humanity needs to shift consciousness from the context to the level of principle, as distinct from pure pragmatism because “in essence, peace stems from an inner state supported by a spiritual or moral attitude, and it is chiefly in evoking this attitude that the possibility of enduring solutions can be found” (Universal House of Justice, 1985). However, the importance of moral and spiritual principles underlying both personal and structural

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Sara Clarke-Habibi (2005) “Transforming Worldviews: The Case of Education for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. *Journal of Transformative Education*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 33-56. Sage Publications

<sup>15</sup> For more information see Deutsch, M. (1993). Educating for a peaceful world. *American Psychologist*, 48, 510-517; I.M. Harris. (2004). Peace Education Theory. *Journal of Peace Education*, Vol.1 No.1, 123 – 127, *March*.

<sup>16</sup> M.R. Van Slyck, M Stern, and S. Elbedour. (1999). Adolescents’ beliefs about their conflict behaviour.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from CIVITAS BiH, a program of democracy and human rights education in primary, secondary and tertiary schools of Bosnia and Herzegovina, [http://www.civitas.ba/nastavni\\_planovi/index.php](http://www.civitas.ba/nastavni_planovi/index.php)

<sup>18</sup> K. Brabeck. (2001). Justification for and implementation of peace education. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 7, 85-87.

peace is still discredited by the academia though it is recognized by leading peace-builders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Maria Montessori and Johan Galtung.

In the words of King:

“We shall not have the will, the courage, and the insight to deal with such matters [as the achievement of peace] unless in this field we are prepared to undergo a mental and spiritual re-evaluation... We will not build a peaceful world by following a negative path. It is not enough to say “We must not wage war.” It is necessary to love peace and sacrifice for it. We must concentrate not merely on the negative expulsion of war, but on the positive affirmation of peace.”<sup>19</sup>

It seems, thus, that we need a transformative, peace-based worldview that will include an integral theory of human nature and a holistic approach to peace education for the intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-group and international dynamics of peace, as well as its main principles and prerequisites.

## **Part II Need for a New Worldview**

Current rise of conflicts both in number and in intensity necessitates humanity to make a radical shift in its worldview and in peace education programs from conflict-based to unity-based worldviews. But what is a worldview? And how to construct a peace-based worldview?

Diederik Aerts et.al define it as “a frame of reference that allows us to coordinate different aspects of the world in a meaningful way”<sup>20</sup>. It is like “a geographic map”<sup>21</sup>, which help us find our way, act coherently and behave responsibly in this world. We need to build such models of our value patterns and action strategies, and confront them with our knowledge about the cosmos and the earth, our biosphere. Without any form of integration, responsible action seems to be impossible.

Since we cannot just let things go their own way (even if little can be changed), but must accept responsibility for our own world, a new effort at integrating these elements is necessary. Such integration can also give a new dimension to our emotional, aesthetic and spiritual connection with the whole.

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<sup>19</sup> Martin Luther King. (1964). “The Quest for Peace and Justice”. Oslo: Nobel Lecture, December 11, 1964, [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-lecture.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-lecture.html).

<sup>20</sup> Diederik Aerts, Leo Apostel, Bart De Moor, Staf Hellemans, Edel Maex, Hubert Van Belle. (2007) World views from fragmentation to integration, Brussels: VUP Press, <http://www.vub.ac.be/CLEA/pub/books/worldviews.pdf>. Van der Veken, J. p.8. The authors offer a monograph that may generate a multiplicity of provisional and evolving worldviews, allowing ultimately the continuation of growth and the synthesis of fact and value, of explanation and meaning to be realized.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.9

How to Construct a Worldview? If we look at the twenty three project proposals collected by Diederik Aerts et.al<sup>22</sup>, we can understand that the construction of world views is not an easy enterprise. Worldview construction consists of the attempt to develop world views that take into account as much as possible all aspects of our experience. What we also see from such a collection of various worldview construction proposals is that despite pointing in many directions, they all look for the unity of the universe in order to discover the meaning of life.

Our worldviews, though we are only partially conscious of them, reflect how we, as an individual or group, perceive reality, human nature, the purpose of human life and the laws governing human relationships, and they influence everything we think, feel and do. Danesh identifies two essential worldviews: conflict-oriented worldviews and peace-based worldviews. He asserts that most of the peoples of the world live with conflict-oriented worldviews. Indeed, “conflict-oriented worldviews are so firmly positioned as the norm in our societies that they pass undetected even when interwoven into peace education lessons, let alone other issues, discussions and activities that occupy us on a daily basis.”<sup>23</sup> As a result, we perpetuate cultures of conflict, we recite our past conflicts in cultural and historical narratives, we engage in conflicts at home and at work, and that how we prepare ourselves our their children for future conflicts.

If peace education wants to be effective, it must address the issue of worldviews and, more importantly, aim to transform worldviews from a conflict-orientation to a peace-orientation. Worldview transformation, called “involves a process of reflection within which one “question[s] the data and assumptions used to conduct one’s life, whether consciously or unconsciously, [in order] to adopt new constructions of reality, life goals, and moral obligations. Such questioning may produce broad changes in a person’s life, leading to quite different worldviews. However, frequently people and organizations make changes and adopt new learning without recognition of the process by which they have chosen new worldviews”<sup>24</sup>.

The Education for Peace program that will be discussed in the following pages attempts to make that process of worldview examination and change a more conscious and deliberate activity. It

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<sup>22</sup> Proposal I: Invariants, Symmetries, and Constants; Proposal II: Variation: The Arrow of Time; Proposal III: Unitary Theories; Proposal IV: Holisms; Proposal V: Pluralisms; Proposal VI: One and Many Systems; Proposal VII: Fundamental Categories; Proposal VIII: Organisation and Self-Organisation. Cybernetics; Proposal IX: Comparative study of Origins: Cosmogenesis, Biogenesis, and Anthropogenesis; Proposal X: Topology of World Views; Proposal XI: World Views and Value Systems;

Proposal XII: Purposes and Externality-Principles; Proposal XIII: Nature and Value; Proposal XIV: Order or Chaos. Determinism or Indeterminism; Proposal XV: Consciousness and Group as Models of Reality; Proposal XVI: World Views and the History of Science; Proposal XVII: Praxiology: Theory and Action; Proposal XVIII: The Control of Complexity; Proposal XIX: The Dialogue of Language Games; Proposal XX: Models of the Future; Proposal XXI: General Anthropology; Proposal XXII: In Search of an Integrated Medicine; Proposal XXIII: Psychiatry and Our Image of Man. For brief explanations see pp.29-39.

<sup>23</sup> M.R. Van Slyck, Stern, M., and Elbedour, S. (1999)

<sup>24</sup> G. Bateson, (1972). *Steps to an ecology of the mind*. New York: Ballantine in Sara Clarke-Habibi. (2005)

“Transforming Worldviews: The Case of Education for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, p. 41.

aims to replace conflict-based constructions of reality with unity-based perceptions and principles. A peace-oriented worldview is one that recognizes the truth that we, “as human beings, are simultaneously psychological, social, political, ethical, and spiritual beings; that human nature is essentially developmental; and that the primary challenge of life is to increase our capacity to create unity-in-diversity within ourselves, our relationships and the world-at-large.”<sup>25</sup> This perspective is based on what Danesh and Danesh call a “unity-centered paradigm”.<sup>26</sup>

### **Part III The philosophy of the Unity-Based Education for Peace**

“The purpose of education is to nurture the unique human capacities of knowledge, love, and will. Through education we learn to use our knowledge in pursuit of truth and enlightenment, our love to create unity and celebrate diversity, and our powers of will to serve humanity through justice and peace”.

H.B. Danesh<sup>27</sup>

#### *A success story of EFP in BiH:*

Based on the assumption that worldview transformation, from a focus on conflict to a focus on unity, is the essential foundation upon which a peaceful global civilization depends.

The EFP program began its work in 2000 by launching a two-year pilot project of Education for Peace in three primary and three secondary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), with the participation of more than 400 teachers and school staff, 6,000 students and their parents/guardians. The primary aim of the project was to create a *unity-based worldview*, a *culture of peace*, a *culture of healing*, and a *culture of excellence* within and among the participating school communities representing the three main ethnic populations—Bosniak (Muslim), Croat (Catholic), and Serb (Orthodox Christianity)—in the highly conflicted post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project had the support of education ministries, municipal leaders, and international authorities. The pilot program yielded significant positive results and gained the recognition and endorsement of all stakeholders: participating school communities, all thirteen Ministries of Education and eight Pedagogical Institutes, as well as the International Community in BiH. As of 2008, The EFP Program has been implemented in some 112 schools with approximately 80,000 students; 5,000 teachers, school staff, administrators; and thousands of parents/guardians. Currently plans are underway to incorporate the EFP Curriculum into the BiH education reform process, thus involving all 2200+ schools with about 1.5 million students and

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<sup>25</sup> S. Clarke-Habibi. (2005) “Transforming Worldviews: The Case of Education for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

<sup>26</sup> H.B. Danesh and R. Danesh (2004). Conflict-free conflict resolution (CFCR): process and methodology. *Peace and Conflict Studies* 11(2) p.67.

<sup>27</sup> The conceptual framework of EFP-International’s Education for Peace program was originated by Dr. H.B. Danesh, psychiatrist and conflict resolution specialist.

110,000 teachers and school staff in the study of all subjects from grades 1–12 within the parameters of peace.<sup>28</sup>

### *What is EFP?*

What is the essence of EFP that led to transformative effects on intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-community and inter-institutional relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina? EFP is a vision created by Danesh to build a “civilization of peace”<sup>29</sup>. It believes that “peace results from wholesome application of a ‘peace-based worldview’ to all aspects of life: survival and security, identity formation, establishing relationships, learning processes, professional pursuits, social building, and leadership and governance.”<sup>30</sup>

It is a part of Unity-Based Peace Programs, based on a basic premise to create civilization of peace, offers a challenging perspective to peace and conflict with regard to both its conceptual and practical dimensions. It defines unity as “the main law governing all human relationships and conflict as the absence of unity”<sup>31</sup>. Starting from this definition, it formulates a comprehensive Unity-Based Peace Education program (known also as Education for Peace-EFP program).

Since 1997, four Unity-Based Peace Programs have been developed and implemented:

- Conflict-Free Conflict Resolution
- Education for Peace [EFP]
- Youth Peacebuilders Network [YPN]
- Leadership for Peace [LFP] (Danesh & Danesh 2007).

Its first critique to other peace theories is that any theories of peace “focus on conflict as an inherent and, therefore, an unavoidable and even necessary aspect of human life”<sup>32</sup> which has led to peace studies to abandon “its primary *raison d’etre*—to study the nature of peace and the dynamics of peacebuilding.”<sup>33</sup> Its second critique is that “most theories of peace do not place adequate emphasis on the process of peace building and the development of the inherent capacities of individuals, institutions, communities, civil society, and governments, both to

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<sup>28</sup> I was honored to be the student of Hossain and Roshan Danesh at European Peace University in 2008 during my Peace and Conflict Studies education. I received most of this information from them personally. I also had the opportunity and pleasure to meet Sanna Heikkinen in Sarajevo, the Project Manager for EFP-World at EFP-Balkans and I was also provided valuable information by her. (The EFP program is administered by the International Education for Peace Institute (EFP-International) and its sister agency, the Education for Peace Institute of the Balkans (EFP-Balkans).

<sup>29</sup> H.B. Danesh. Unity-Based peace education. (2008). In *Encyclopedia of Peace Education*.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> H.B. Danesh and R.P. Danesh (2002). Has Conflict Resolution Grown Up?: Toward a New Model of Decision Making and Conflict Resolution. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 7(1), p.63.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.64.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

prevent violence and to create harmonious relationships.”<sup>34</sup> Danesh writes “We teach our children much more about conflict and war than harmony and peace. Consequently, every new generation repeats the mistakes of former generations, and conflict and violence become permanent facets of human societies.”<sup>35</sup>

In order to meet the challenge of peace, EFP suggests to create unique school communities characterized by a *culture of peace*, a *culture of healing*, and a *culture of excellence*” which together comprise the essentials of “a civilization for peace.”<sup>36</sup>

### **Mechanisms for Creating A “Civilization For Peace”**

In order to meet this enormous challenge Danesh and Danesh urge that we “lay the foundations of a sustainable and universal civilization of peace [...]all levels of human experience—intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, international, and global”<sup>37</sup> and they identify three essential tasks that should be undertaken locally, nationally and globally:

a- Education for Peace: It aims to educate every new generation of the world’s children and youth with the help of their parents, teachers, and other educators (e.g. the media)—to become peacemakers;

b- Leadership for Peace: It aims to create forums for the leaders at local, regional, national, international, and global levels to study and implement the principles of peaceful governance in their respective communities and institutions; and

c- Conflict-Free Conflict Resolution: It is a unique method of conflict resolution, which is built upon the principles of a unity-oriented worldview. It offers training opportunities in the principles and skills of conflict prevention and peaceful conflict resolution for citizens and leaders at local, regional, national, international, and global levels.<sup>38</sup>

### **Basic Premises of EFP Program**

There are three basic premises of EFP: Unity, Worldview, and Human Individual and Collective Development.

- “Unity, not conflict, is the main force in human relationships;

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.65.

<sup>35</sup> H.B. Danesh (2006). Towards an integrative theory of peace education, *Journal of Peace Education*. 3(1), p.66.

<sup>36</sup> Danesh, H.B and Clarke-Habibi, S. (2007). *Education for peace curriculum manual: a conceptual and practical guide*, Vol.1, Vancouver: EFP Press, p.276.

<sup>37</sup> H.B. Danesh and R. Danesh (2004). Conflict-free conflict resolution (CFCR): process and methodology, p.72.

<sup>38</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 55–84 and also H.B. Danesh and R.P. Danesh, R.P. Has Conflict Resolution Grown Up?: Toward a New Model of Decision Making and Conflict Resolution. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 7(1), 59-76.

- Worldview is the main framework within which all human individual and group behavior takes shape; and

- Peace is the main outcome of a unity-based worldview.”<sup>39</sup>

#### *1-Unity:*

In EFP the concept of ‘unity’ at all levels—biological, psychological, social, moral, and spiritual— rather than ‘conflict’ is the central governing law of life and that once unity is established, conflicts are often prevented or easily resolved. Unity is defined as:

“...a purposeful integration of two or more unique entities in a state of harmony and cooperation, resulting in the creation of a new, evolving entity, usually of a higher order”.<sup>40</sup>

#### *2-Worldview:*

The concept of worldview refers to “the framework through which we understand reality, human nature, the primary purpose of life, and the laws of relationships. Our thoughts, feelings and actions are shaped by our individual and collective worldviews.”<sup>41</sup>

There are three metacategories of worldview—Survival-Based (authoritarian), Identity -Based (adversarial) and Unity-Based (integrative)

Three metacategories of worldview—survival-based, identity-based, and unity based—are identified within the parameters of psychosocial developmental stages roughly corresponding to those of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Both survival-based and identity-based worldviews revolve around the issue of power—dominance and power-struggle, respectively—and are highly prone to conflict and violence.<sup>42</sup>

#### *Survival-based worldview:*

At this stage, issues of survival and security—hunger, disease, natural threats and actual or imagined malevolent forces—are the most dominant and immediate challenges of life. To deal with these challenges, our natural tendency is to seek power and to defend ourselves in the face of perceived dangers. However, as history amply demonstrates, these practices are counter-effective and often result in creating conditions of mistrust, conflict, and violence that further increase the level of insecurity.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> H.B. Danesh and S. Clarke-Habibi (2007), pp.4-14

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.29.

<sup>42</sup> For more information see also H.B. Danesh (2006). Towards an integrative theory of peace education, *Journal of Peace Education*. 3(1), 55-78.

<sup>43</sup> See H.B. Danesh (2006). Towards an integrative theory of peace education, *Journal of Peace Education*. 3(1), 55-78; Danesh and Danesh (2004). Conflict-free conflict resolution (CFCR); H.B. Danesh and S. Clarke-Habibi (2007), pp.29-69.

*Identity-based worldview:*

As we gradually mature, both individually and as communities of people, a new mindset, correspondent with the age of adolescence, begins to shape our thoughts, feelings and actions. The central theme of this mindset—the identity-based worldview—is the process of formation of individual and group identity. Among the main characteristics of this worldview are frequent episodes of volatile conflicts, power struggle and competition. Those who hold such worldviews often have adversarial relationships in the context of the notion of the “survival of the fittest” in all areas of their individual and group life—familial, political, economic, social, academic, religious, and professional. The adolescent worldview revolves around our awareness of ourselves in relationship to both other people and our own hopes and aspirations. This mindset promotes self-centeredness, individualism, and adversarial group identities with the objective being to get ahead of others and to win.<sup>44</sup>

Although these two worldviews are most prevalent in the contemporary world and are strongly defended by those who hold them, nevertheless, they are proving incapable of meeting the needs of humanity. In fact, these worldviews clearly do more harm than good to humanity and are the fountainhead of most conflict, aggression, violence, poverty, and injustice afflicting the masses of humanity across all societies. Within this context a new worldview—the unity-based worldview—is gradually emerging in all areas of human life.<sup>45</sup>

*Unity-based worldview:*

*The Unity-Based (Integrative) Worldview* considers unity rather than conflict to be the primary law operating in human life and relationships. It perceives conflict to be simply a symptom of the absence of unity. It points out that various theories of conflict—biological, psychological, and social—could be accounted for and the diverse expressions of our humanness could be understood within an integrative developmental framework. Here, it suffices to point out that within the framework of the unity-based worldview the legitimate concerns of both survival-based and identity-based worldviews, such as individual and group security, identity validation, and mutual respect and opportunity are met. Furthermore, such fundamental objectives as equality, justice, and freedom from prejudice and oppression can best be accomplished within the operation of the unity-based worldview.<sup>46</sup>

Table. Characteristics of the three metacategories of worldview.

<i>Survival-Based Worldview</i>	<i>Identity-Based Worldview</i>	<i>Unity-Based Worldview</i>
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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normal during childhood.</li> <li>• Corresponds to the agrarian and pre-industrial periods of societal development.</li> <li>• Develops under conditions of poverty, injustice, anarchy, physical threat, and war.</li> <li>• Life processes are viewed as being dangerous.</li> <li>• Dichotomous views of human nature as either bad (weak) or good (strong) and human beings are viewed as good or evil.</li> <li>• The main purpose of life is survival.</li> <li>• All relationships take place in the context of domination and submission—proclivity to use force and/or conformity.</li> <li>• Conflict and violence are inevitable.</li> <li>• Authoritarianism is the main mode of leadership and governance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normal during adolescence.</li> <li>• Corresponds to the gradual coming of age of both the individual and the society.</li> <li>• Is particularly prevalent during emergence from authoritarian and/or revolutionary circumstances and rapid social change.</li> <li>• Life is viewed as an arena of the “survival of the fittest”.</li> <li>• Individualistic view of human nature with focus on individualism and group identities—ethnicity, nationality, race, religion, etc.</li> <li>• The main purpose of life is to “have” and to “win”, which corresponds with the notion of human nature as greedy and selfish.</li> <li>• All relationships operate within the parameters of extremes of competition and rivalry.</li> <li>• Conflict is viewed as inherent in human nature and necessary for progress.</li> <li>• Adversarial Democracy is the main mode of leadership and governance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normal during adulthood.</li> <li>• Corresponds with the phase of maturity of humanity based on the consciousness of the oneness of humanity.</li> <li>• Is the next stage in human individual and collective development.</li> <li>• Life is seen as the process of unity-building.</li> <li>• Views human nature to be potentially noble, creative and integrative, and highly responsive to the forces of nature and nurture.</li> <li>• Views the main purpose of human life as the creation of a civilization of peace—equal, just, liberal, moral, diverse, and united.</li> <li>• All relationships operate within the parameters of the law of unity in the context of diversity.</li> <li>• Conflict is viewed as the absence of unity.</li> <li>• An integrated unity-based democracy is seen to be emerging as the main mode of leadership and governance (Danesh 2002, 2006).</li> </ul>
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### *3- Human Individual and Collective Development*

Third premise of EFP the developmental perspective human individual and collective life. Danesh says that worldviews “evolve in direct response to the development of human

consciousness”. ‘Development’ in this context refers to the fact that all human beings pass through the dynamic phases of infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Likewise, humanity on a collective level evolves through similar stages in its historic, experimental journey towards collective maturity.<sup>47</sup>

According to Danesh and Danesh, while conflict, insecurity and power-struggles mark earlier stages in the development of human beings and societies, maturity represents the acquired capacity to create unity in the context of diversity, to establish relationships based on truthfulness and respect, and to administer the affairs of human life in a spirit of service and in a manner that is just.<sup>48</sup> With the development of consciousness comes the development of more integrative and peace-oriented worldviews. This process “alters not only our selves but also the nature of all of our relationships”.<sup>49</sup> In other words, a peace-oriented worldview requires us to establish peace within ourselves, with our relations vis-à-vis external life and to prepare ourselves to contribute constantly to create peace and unity in our cultures and societies.

### How to Change Worldview?

Worldview transformation, although very difficult, can be both accelerated and facilitated, once we consider the nature and dynamics of human individual and collective development and the monumental role that education plays in this process. Formation of worldview is a process that usually takes place at a subconscious, automatic level through our life experiences and education at home, in schools, and within our respective cultures. Thus, in every generation the majority adopts the worldview of the previous generation, and only a small percentage of individuals consciously attempt to adopt a different worldview.

The Education for Peace offers to structure a reflection process related to four key elements of all worldviews and then to apply them to four level of human experience: Self, family, society, world. The key questions related to reflection process are the following: What is reality? What is human nature? What is the main purpose of human life? What are the laws governing human relationships?

It claims that simple and profound questions that direct the learners to think critically about their identity, purpose in life, assumptions about the world around them, and their role in creating a peaceful civilisation.

### Conclusion

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<sup>47</sup> From my class notes of Hossain Danesh during his “Education for Peace” course at European Peace University in March 2008.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

It appears that peace education needs to develop an integrative vision from itself that will lead to a conscious effort for individual and collective psychosocial and political, as well as a moral and spiritual transformation.

Swhee-Hin Toh states:

“If peace education is not able or willing to try to move not just minds but also hearts and spirits into personal and social action for peacebuilding, it will remain emasculated, a largely “academic” exercise even in the non-formal context... While the non-formal community sector is often seen as the “natural” site for critical empowerment, the formal education institutions should also challenge learners towards transformation.”<sup>50</sup>

EFPP had the impact it did because it aimed not at a set of activities or exercises, but at personal and collective worldview transformation - that is, at a transformation in the way the individuals and school communities conceived of self, human potential, and the purpose and dynamics of human collective life. The pedagogical tools introduced to teachers were effective in creating a culture of peace and a culture of healing to the degree that they assisted the process of transforming the worldviews of participants from a conflict-orientation to a peace-orientation.

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<sup>50</sup> Swhee-Hin Toh (1997). “Education for Peace: Towards a Millennium of Well-Being”. Paper for the Working Document of the International Conference on Culture of Peace and Governance (Maputo, Mozambique, 1-4 September, 1997), <http://www.peace.ca/educationforpeace.htm>.  
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