Conflict Matters. Peace and Conflict Education Practices Towards SDG16

Conflict Matters. Prácticas de Educación para la Paz y en el Conflicto hacia el ODS16

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SDG16 aims at fostering peaceful and inclusive societies and accountable and inclusive institutions. (How) can this be achieved through peace education? The article evaluates the extent in which 25 European peace education practices succeed contributing to the accomplishment of SDG16 regarding the decrease of violence and the improvement of democratic institutions. Taking into account peacebuilding literature that highlights the importance of institutionalizing peace education initiatives, the article analyses the objectives, target, approaches, results and impacts of the 25 initiatives, and assesses to what extent they address the micro, meso, and macro level. Results show that a relatively high proportion of objectives (23,9%) focus on the institutional-school level, that most of them target multipliers (as teachers and school staff) and that many practices prioritise a preventive approach. Regarding results and impacts, outstanding results are reached in skills development for conflict transformation, but that this does not imply significant reductions of violent situations. While most of the practices aim at more comprehensive results than violence contention –but rather a broader conception of peaceful coexistence– very few take action to foster the participation of students in the school system. Further research is needed to identify indicators of structural and cultural violence at schools, to assess the effectiveness of mainstreaming peace and conflict education principles in the school institution to decrease violence, and about the educational policies that better contribute to effective peace and conflict education programs.

Keywords: Peace education; Evaluation; Violence; Conflict research; School community relationship.

El ODS16 tiene como objetivo fomentar sociedades pacíficas e inclusivas e instituciones responsables e inclusivas. ¿(Cómo) se puede lograr esto a través de la educación para la paz? El artículo evalúa hasta qué punto 25 prácticas europeas de educación para la paz contribuyen al logro del ODS16 en relación con la disminución de la violencia y la mejora de las instituciones democráticas. Partiendo de literatura de construcción de paz que resalta la importancia de institucionalizar las iniciativas de educación para la paz, el artículo analiza los objetivos, participantes, enfoques metodológicos, resultados e impactos de esas 25 iniciativas, y evalúa en qué medida abordan los niveles micro, meso y macro. Los resultados muestran que una proporción relativamente alta de objetivos (23,9%) se centra en el nivel institucional-de centro escolar, que la mayoría de estas prácticas se dirigen a actores multiplicadores (como maestros y equipo directivo de los centros) y que muchas prácticas priorizan un enfoque preventivo. Con respecto a los resultados e impactos, se alcanzan resultados sobresalientes en el desarrollo de habilidades para la transformación de conflictos, pero esto no implica una reducción significativa de

las situaciones de violencia. Si bien la mayoría de las prácticas apuntan a resultados más amplios que la mera contención de la violencia si no, en cambio, una concepción más comprehensiva, de convivencia, muy pocas actúan para fortalecer la participación del estudiantado en el sistema escolar. Es necesaria más investigación para identificar indicadores de violencia estructural y cultural en las escuelas, para evaluar la efectividad de la integración de los principios de educación para la paz y los conflictos en la institución escolar para disminuir la violencia, y sobre las políticas educativas que contribuyen mejor a los programas efectivos de educación para la paz y los conflictos.

Descriptores: Educación para la paz; Evaluación; Violencia; Investigación sobre los conflictos; Relación escuela comunidad.

1. Literature review

Peace and conflict education are addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals in a variety of ways. It is broadly mentioned in SDG4 as the need to promote peace and nonviolence:

> *by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.* (art.4.7)

SDG16, which tackles peaceful and inclusive societies as well as accountable and inclusive institutions, is also relevant for peace education initiatives when it refers to the decrease of violence (reducing all forms of violence (16.1), ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children (16.2), and to the strengthening of democratic institutions (Developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels (16.6), ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (16.7).

In a global scale, these goals and targets are measured with data such as homicide rates, sexual violence, human traffic figures, and others, but indicators referring smaller scale realities (school bullying, degree of peaceful coexistence, quality of participation at schools of in local decisions) are not yet taken into consideration. In that sense, the SDG are useful guidelines to assess the most dramatic challenges, but are not so useful for small scale projects that promote conflict transformation and peace education.

At a smaller scale, UNICEF is analysing the scope of violence at schools through cases of bullying and cyberbullying, fights and physical attacks, violent punishments, armed attacks to schools and sexual violence (UNICEF, 2017, 2018). This data shows great challenges, such as the fact that, worldwide, slightly more than 33% of the students aged 13–15 experience bullying (UNICEF, 2018, p. 3), and that around 1.1 billion caregivers, slightly more than 25%, admit to believing in the necessity of physical punishment as a form of discipline (UNICEF 2017p. 8). While the assessment of these issues is a good step to address the problem of violence in education, there is still a lot to be done.

Some world statistics are even measuring indicators that allow having an idea about peaceful coexistence at schools, such as the quadrennial study Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC), which assesses the degree in which children like being together, feel kindness from other students and feel supported by them, and feel accepted by other students.

While all these measurements are needed to assess to what extent improvements are made in a global scale, these do not help to identify which mechanisms are more useful and effective to address the issue. While some countries do address culture of peace, nonviolent conflict transformation and the prevention of violence in a country-wide scale, usually such initiatives are undertaken in a much smaller dimension, by a variety of actors.

Despite increasing concern about the issue, determining the degree of success of small scale peace education initiatives is far from being a widespread practice. Classic and more recent investigations point out the need to better evaluate the effectiveness of peace education and to assess what is more transformative in such field.

The most frequent evaluations in peace education focus in the participant's perception or satisfaction (Spruyt et al., 2014, p. 82), or in the contribution of peace education initiatives to improve conflict transformation skills within a group. It is far less common to assess to what extent a peace education program contributes to decrease violence or to improve democratic institutions at a society level.

Some authors, (Harris, 2003; Wintersteiner, 2015) argue that peace education's contribution to macro level peacebuilding is unrealistic, and should not therefore be the purpose of peace education programs. Others believe peace education has some impact in peacebuilding, however small it may be.

Comparing several peacebuilding initiatives, Paffenholz (2009) claims that peace education and dialogue efforts

> *had a very low level of effectiveness in terms of reducing violence, contributing to agreements and sustaining peace. This was due to the way most initiatives within these functions were conducted, and the way they were impacted by certain contextual factors.* (p. 7)

Indeed, regarding contextual factors, several authors –Kupermintz, & Salomon (2005); Paffenholz (2010)– warn about the low impacts when peace education programs are carried out in the midst of severe socio-political confrontations or armed violence. Although contextual factors always matter, the negative impact of an open violence will not be analysed in the present article, as it looks at contexts with relatively low levels of violence in European countries, or in a Post-conflict situation (in the case of Croatia and Northern Ireland). Regarding the first factor identified by Paffenholz, the way these programs are conducted, this will be one of the focuses of this article.

A recent comprehensive literature review has observed that most authors focus their assessments in the extent and the way the competencies that allow improving relationships between people are strengthened. This is at the expense of other expected outcomes of peace education, which are far less analyzed, such as the institutionalisation of peace education: "the literature on peace education suffers from a serious lack of theoretical work at meso level" (Spruyt et al., 2014, p. 82).

Indeed, several authors (Davies, 2004; Paffenholz 2010) suggest, after comparative analyses of peace education initiatives, that research and practice should pay more attention to the institutional and structural dimensions of such projects, even if these are more difficult and on a longer term.

Based on the Reflecting on Peace Practices findings, which have concluded that "impacts for the broader peace are more significant if these personal transformations are

translated into actions at the Socio-Political level" (CDA, 2014, p. 39), this article focuses on how peace education programs succeed to improve competencies related to peace education, and the extent in which these also address the meso and the macro level.

This article analyses 25 European peace education practices with the objective to assess to what extent they address the micro, meso and macro levels to contribute to the accomplishment of the SDG16 regarding peace and justice, namely the decrease of violence and the improvement of democratic structures.

To start with, a short input on peace education and peacebuilding literature review will frame the debate about peace education programs, its evaluation, and their capacity to achieve positive changes. After explaining the methodology that has been used for the research, the article will analyse the main features of 25 peace education practices around Europe, examining their objectives, targets, approaches, evaluation strategies, results and impacts. This will be useful to identify, in the following section, good practices and lessons learnt, and to draw conclusions and formulate questions for future debates.

2. Method

To analyse how well peace education practices, contribute to the decrease of violence and the improvement of democratic participation (SDG16), the article is framed in the critical thinking paradigm. It seeks, indeed, to improve practices and to diminish oppression and violence in society and at schools, by empowering the affected actors to overcome the situation by themselves. It also identifies lessons learnt in order to give clues about how to strengthen the impact of the practices. As explained in more detail below, it uses mostly qualitative research methodologies, including reflection with trainers and/or managers of the practices, to enable a joint learning process.

This article is also inspired by the Morin's complexity approach, defined by three research principles: the dialectical, the hologramatic and the recursiveness principles, and their application to peace education research (Barbeito & Ospina, 2015, pp. 241-246): The dialectical principle suggests that it is preferable to consider a variety of analysed objects; The hologramatic principle considers phenomena from the micro to the macro level at the same time, and how the part influences the whole and vice-versa; The recursiveness principle does not seek to establish cause-effect explanations but rather to identify synergies of factors that contribute to create virtuous spirals of peace

In this respect, and according to the dialectical principle, the several practices that have been analysed in this article use different measures and approaches, allowing contradictions in the studied subject. The different approaches that have been analysed in this article can fit the Cremin and Bewington model (2017, p. 5) of peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building educational practices, aiming at limiting the likelihood of direct violence, at dealing with conflicts, and at developing pro-social attitudes and behaviours to build a community of care, respectively. These categories match with classic conceptual distinction of conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

Also, in accordance with the hologramatic principle, the research reflects about the interaction between the micro (relationships in the classroom), the meso (school

structure) and the macro level (community and educational policies), considering whether practices focussed on the classroom do also influence the other levels, and, to some extent, how some policies (educational laws, educational systems) influence the practices.

Finally, the recursiveness principle is reflected in this article by the fact that it does not seek to establish cause-effect relations, but to identify sets of measures that contribute to effective violence peace education practices.

To assess the degree in which some European peace education practices contribute to the decrease of violence and the improvement of democratic participation, the following analysis categories have been observed: Objectives of the practices (What are they aiming at? Which are their levels of transformation (micro/meso/macro)? Evaluation practices (To what extent are evaluations undertaken? In which way? What do they evaluate?) Level of transformation (Which are the identifiable results and impacts? Which are the most significant outcomes at the micro, meso and macro level? and also What contributes to change?)

The research is based upon the analysis of 25 practices (N = 25) implemented in small, medium or big cities in 11 European countries, by formal or non-formal educational institutions[1], which consider conflict as a mean for positive transformation from kindergarten to life-long learning. Indeed, all these 25 practices, which compose the online platform "Conflict Matters", meet the following four criteria: They consider conflict as an opportunity rather than a problem; They empower students to solve conflicts by themselves; Their educators are aware of their position as role models and of the importance of personal coherence and acting accordingly; and They challenge the school system in order to introduce conflict management mechanisms both structurally and sustainably.

All those peace education initiatives are considered good practices as they have been finalists in one of the three editions of the Evens Foundation Peace Education prize, which takes place biannually since the year 2013. These practices have been initially shortlisted by a peace education expert in the Evens Foundation, who further analysed them in an in-site visit to elaborate a report based on her observations and interviews of the practitioners. Practices were then selected by a jury composed by six to eight members, also specialists in the peace education field.

The main sources of information regarding these practices are their descriptions posted in the "Conflict Matters" online platform, the Evens Foundation visit reports, documents and website elaborated by the practitioners or organisations themselves, and interviews with the practitioners (in-site interviews for the elaboration of the reports for most of them, and skype interviews for some other practices to reflect together about

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[1] To get more information about the practices, consult the "Conflict Matters" map. The organisations leading the selected practices are: Ariel Trust (UK); Atelier de la Petite Enfance (France) ; Basque government (Spain); Centro PsicoPedagogico per l'educazione e la gestione dei conflitti (CPP) (Italy); De Kleine Berg (Belgium); Deep black (UK); Municipal Kindergarten Cappont (Spain); Escola de Cultura de Pau (Spain); Escola Marina (Spain); Forum for Freedom in Education (Croatia); Génération Médiateurs (France); Granada University (Spain); Káva (Hungary); Léon Jouhaux primary school (France); National Centre for Restorative Approaches in Youth Settings (UK); New-Bridge Integrated College (Northern Ireland); Planpolitik (Germany); RAEEP Andalusian Network School Space of Peace (Spain); Rogers Kindergarten and School (Hungary); Skolande (Sweden). Tierlantuin (Belgium); UNICEF Office for Croatia (Croatia); Université de la paix (Belgium); University of Osijek (Croatia); Youth Town (Denmark).

their practices and to clarify doubts). Qualitative and quantitative data from these sources of information has then been analysed.

All this research process has allowed to reach, after a long reflection process, the conclusions explained in the following chapter.

3. Results of the research

To learn from those practices and to assess their outcomes and impacts, several items have been looked into: To what extent their objectives address the micro, meso or macro level? How strategic is the target? How transformative are the approaches? Which are the most remarkable results, impacts and lessons learnt?

3.1. Objectives

The 25 European practices that have been looked into show a variety of objectives at different levels (see table 1), and at the same time reveal that a majority of practices focus on the same objectives (mostly skills development).

Table 1. Targeted objectives by level (micro, meso, macro)

Micro level: development of competences to address conflict in a constructive way
• Knowledge
• Skills
• Attitudes
Meso level: institutionalisation at the school level of conflict transformation policies
• Definition of school protocols
• Modelling of a peaceful environment
Macro level: impact in the community for the decrease of violence and a more peaceful coexistence
• Community support networks
• Social impact of the projects

Note: Prepared by the autor on the basis of the objectives of the analysed practices.

Following these categories, the objectives of peace education programs refer to:

Knowledge

Objectives referring to knowledge are surprisingly not the most common ones. Only a 7,1% of the objectives refer to knowledge, including learning to distinguish "conflict", "war" and "violence" (CPP), to recognize different types of conflicts and problems (University of Osijek), to learn about the different forms of mediation (peer, organizational and family mediation) (Forum for Freedom in Education), to master the existing "advanced" type of conflict transformation interventions (Forum for Freedom in Education), to understand different levels of communication, from the individual to the societal level, and the cultural context (University of Osijek), to achieve a reasonable knowledge of the culture of peace and its various dimensions as an educational program (Universidad de Granada).

Skills

In contrast, the acquisition of skills to transform conflicts is by far the larger category of objectives: Objectives referring to skills represent 45,1% of the sum of objectives of the analysed practices. Some refer to conflict management-peacekeeping, such as abilities to

name or to report situations of violent incidents (Youth town, Ariel Trust, Deep black, Université de Paix) or the ability of teachers to recognise instances of violence (UNICEF-HR).

Some are conflict resolution-peacemaking skills, such as self-awareness of the own behaviour in conflicts (Forum for Freedom in Education, Youth town) and of the own biases (Forum for Freedom in Education), to diagnose conflict situations (CPP), to develop mediation skills (Forum for Freedom in Education, Université de Paix, University of Osijek), to engage in negotiations (Planpolitik) or problem-solving and joint decision-making (Káva).

Many other refer to personal and relational skills (conflict transformation-peacebuilding), such as the ability to build the own identity (Kleine Berg), positive self-image, self-esteem and self-reliance (Tierlantuin, Atelier de la Petite Enfance), confidence towards others (Atelier de la Petite Enfance, Université de Paix), trust and cooperation (Escola Marina, Rogers School, Université de Paix), empathy through dialogue (Planpolitik). Communication skills, present in the vast majority of practices, include expressing their own views (New Bridge college, Káva), listening to each other (Université de Paix, Youth town), developing respect of their own and others' views (New Bridge, Université de Paix, Rogers School), and more precisely nonviolent communication abilities (Léon Jouhaux, Skollande, University of Osijek, Youth town).

Attitudes

About 4,5% of the objectives aim at promoting an active role of their participants, by, for example, giving responsibility to students in addressing conflicts by themselves, or by promoting the involvement of pupils in improving the school environment (Léon Jouhaux).

Protocols and practices

Some objectives (9,7%) refer to the establishment of practices and protocols at the school level. These refer to the use of effective rules (CPP), to replacing punishments and disciplinary procedures with restorative measures (Transforming Conflict), to the promotion of peer mediation in schools (Génération Médiateurs, Deep black) to equipping schools with intervention protocols to prevent violence (UNICEF), to the improvement of schools' Coexistence Plans[2] from a Culture of Peace perspective (Escola de Cultura de Pau, RAEEP), or to include culture of peace in the school curriculum (Universidad de Granada, CPP).

School environment

To seek school coherence towards a peaceful environment, 14,2% of the objectives point at: creating a violent-free setting (Cappont), helping create safe, supporting, harmonious and appreciative environment (Cappont, CPP, Deep black, Rogers School, Transforming conflict, Youth Town), building staff confidence to teach controversial issues (New Bridge), fostering a culture of non-violence and an understanding of conflict as an opportunity (CPP, Génération Médiateurs), cultivating a sense of shared responsibility

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[2] Coexistence Plans are whole school strategies that Spanish schools are obliged to define in order to state how they will improve peaceful coexistence in their schools.

and commitment across the entire school to promote culture of peace (Basque Plan, UNICEF), or improving the peaceful coexistence climate in schools, (RAEEP).

Community support networks

In some cases (5,3%), practices aim at establishing networks of community actors, and define objectives such as learning how to build the support networks required to respond to domestic abuse or controlling behaviour (Ariel Trust), or building bridges between families and the neighbourhood for a closer engagement in the project, and to promote social inclusion (Die Kleine Berg, Tierlantuin).

Social impact

Finally, some practices make explicit broader objectives (4,4%), such as the reduction of violence and bullying in schools and the neighbourhoods (Transforming conflict, UNICEF, Basque government) or to promote social cohesion in and outside of the school (Escola Marina).

Objectives stress evidently in skills more than any other type of objective. Distinguishing skills and attitudes is not always that simple, and that is a possible reason why skills have such a weight in the objectives. In any case, the sum of objectives related to learning (knowledge, skills and attitudes) at the micro level represent more than half of the objectives (57,2%) (see figure 1). This fact can seem logical in educational initiatives, but it is important to remind that peacebuilding evaluation literature recommends to complement training activities with schools' institutionalization efforts (objectives at the school-meso level represent 23,9% of the objectives), or even at a larger level (9% only of the objectives refer to the macro level). Among the analyzed practices, none had the aim to influence local or state policy makers nor other actors at a macro level.
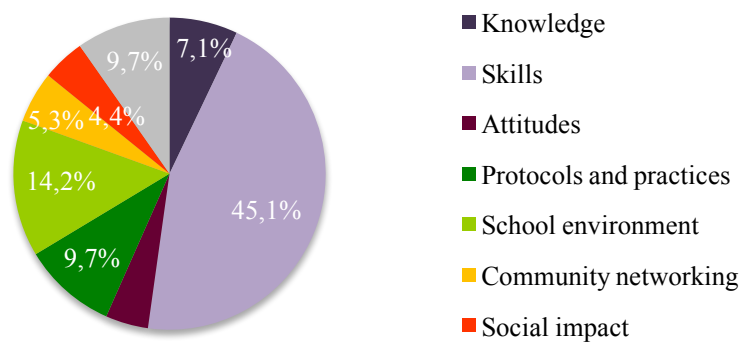

Figure 1 Proportion of objectives by type
Note: Prepared by the author.

To what extent do these objectives contribute to meet the SDGS? Several of them refer explicitly to the reduction of violence at different levels (such as being able to recognize instances of violence, to report violent incidents (micro), to establish protocols for the prevention of violence, to set violent-free environments (meso), to reduce violence and bullying at school and the environments (macro). The reduction of violence is therefore a quite substantial objective, in line with SDG16. Even more objectives, thought, surpass

the reduction of bullying and violence (negative peace), to propose to target the creation of peaceful coexistence climates (positive peace), in this sense, many of the practices are more ambitious than targets within SDG16 that aim merely at violence contention (targets 16.1, 16.2).

On the other hand, only three practices promote real participation of students (Léon Jouhaux) or families (Tierlantuin, De Kleine Berg) within the school organization, and none considers the importance that schools or other educational institutions participate in educational channels of consultation and participation to advocate for better peace education and conflict transformation policies. Most of the analysed practices, then, do not have as an objective to contribute to targets 16.6 nor 16.7. regarding democratic institutions as a way to contribute to peace and justice.

3.2. Target

Many practices intervene mostly in compulsory education, as shown in figure 2: the educational levels that are most commonly addressed are primary and secondary education (56% and 52% respectively), and in a lesser extent kindergarten (24%) and universities (16%). In one case, an organization -the National Centre for Restorative Approaches in Youth Settings- focuses on special education, but no practice was found on vocational training.
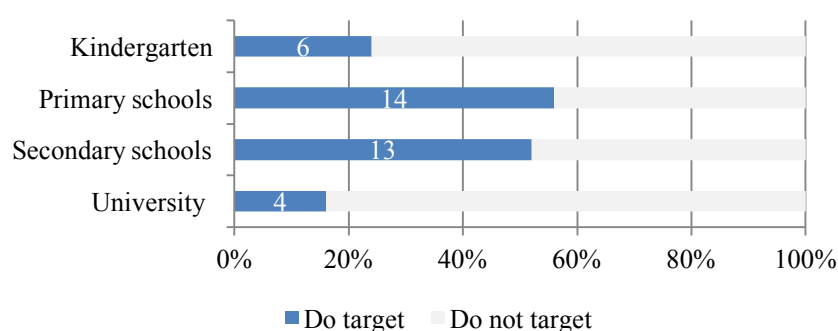

Figure 2. Educational levels addressed by the analysed practices
Note: Prepared by the author.

Most of the analysed practices target more than one actor at the same time. A large majority (76%) train teachers, and 64% target students. School staff, school director and board (32%), families (24%) and the neighbouring community are targeted in a far lesser extent, as shown in figure 3. None of the analysed practices targeted policy makers significantly.
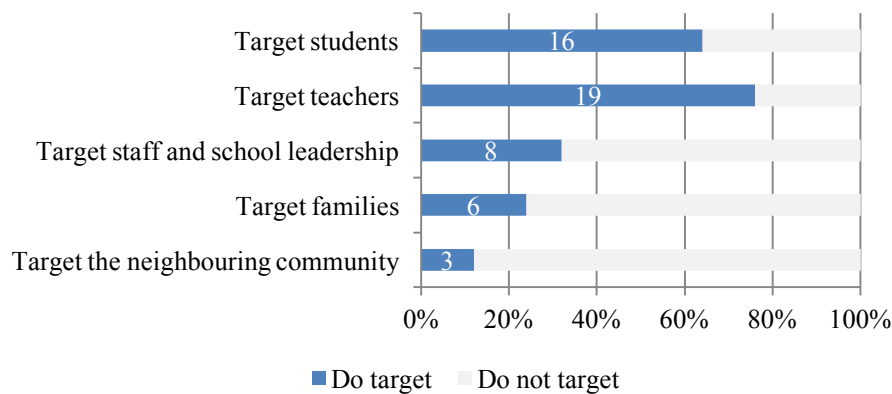
Figure 3. Most common actors targeted by the analysed practices
Note: Prepared by the author.

The distribution is sufficiently equilibrated in addressing all levels, from kindergarten to university. Although the sample is too little to set conclusions about the field, it is relevant to see there are significant practices at all levels. The fact that at least 75% of the practices target teachers or other school staff does also contribute to the multiplication and the sustainability of the impact of the actions, although there could be more structural levels to tackle.

3.3. Description of the main approaches and activities

Practices use a wide variety of methodologies, more or less classic in the peace education and conflict transformation field. The most common used methodologies among the analysed practices are Marshall Rosemberg's Nonviolent Communication, Peer Mediation, Belinda Hopkins's Restorative Practices, and Learning Communities.

Some organizations use their own methods (Université de Paix, Youth Town) based on the inputs of several authors added to their own practice-based conceptualization, and some others use, as method for conflict transformation, approaches that were not initially though for doing so, but that can contribute to transform conflicts, such as Fernand Oury's Institutional pedagogy or Carl Rogers's Person-centred Approach.

Organisations also use techniques such as controversial issues (New Bridge, Planpolitik, Káva), Socratic dialogue (CPP). And most of them use experiential learning activities such as dialogues, group dynamics, games, practice of communication. A significant number of organizations use distancing activities (Stradling, 1984, quoted at Council of Europe, 2015, pp. 67-69) such as drama, role plays, or the use of videos allow addressing an issue by the mean of fictive characters, which allow participants to be engaged with a sensitive issue without being too personally involved.

From a time perspective, regarding the cycle of a conflict, most of the analysed approaches intervene in different moments of the cycle of conflict, but at the same time put more emphasis at one moment of this cycle. As shown in figure 4., while some practices focus on addressing conflict when open confrontation hasn't arisen yet (or Provention according to Burton, 1965), some others prioritise peer mediation, in the crisis of the conflict, or restorative practices once the conflict has passed its peak of confrontation.
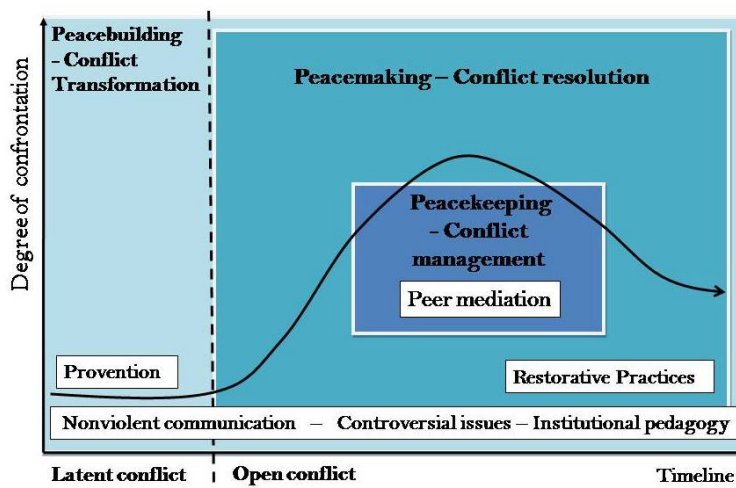
Figure 4. Methodological approaches regarding the cycle of a conflict
Note: Prepared by the author.

But despite that the consideration of these approaches as big categories might suggest that the focus of conflict education is before, during, or after the hatching of confrontation in a conflict, a closer look at the educational objectives within those practices shows that many of these approaches intervene before the conflict rises. Indeed, as discussed earlier in this article, most of the educational objectives of the practices refer to personal and relational abilities, which is the main focus of provention: to PROvide people with the ability to address (and not PREvent) conflict by themselves.

Taking into account that research about peacebuilding and peace education considers the most cost-effective practices for the promotion of peace is to act as soon as possible, it can be considered good news that most of the practices put an important focus on intervening at an early phase of the conflict through the improvement of relational skills.

In many cases, practices go beyond the classroom and try to reach a more structural level. As shown in figure 5, while 28% of the practices apply their methods at the classroom level, 48% use a whole school approach, by inviting participants to analyse violence and conflict at a school level, by training teachers and school staff, by establishing school protocols, procedures and activities. Then 16% of the practices' methodologies involve numerous actors at the community level, and 8% at an even broader scale, as a network of schools (RAEEP) or a public policy (Basque plan).
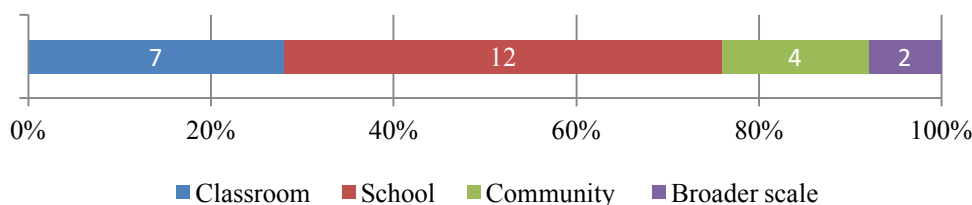

Figure 5. Level of application of the approach
Note: Prepared by the author.

Also, the evolution of the practices over time show an increasing tendency to address more and more the structural level, which is usually considered as a pre-requisite for reaching more sustainable effects in a practice (CDA, 2014, p. 39).

3.4. Performance, results and impacts of the analysed practices

Evaluating the results and impacts of peace education practices can be considered the crux of the matter, as it helps determining to what extent a practice was worth being implemented.

As shown in figure 6, among the analysed practices, 22 organisations (88%) do evaluate in one way or another all their trainings, while only 3 (12%) do not evaluate every training they organise. This is quite a high proportion, considering the often-quoted datum which considers that only one third of the peace education practices do evaluate their effectiveness (Nevo & Brem 2002).
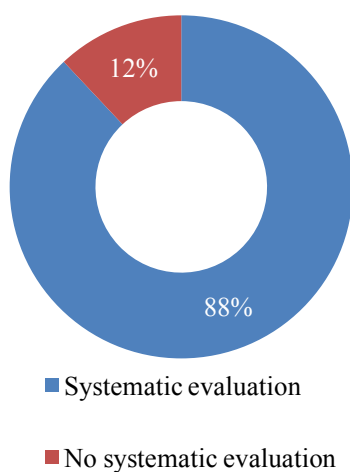

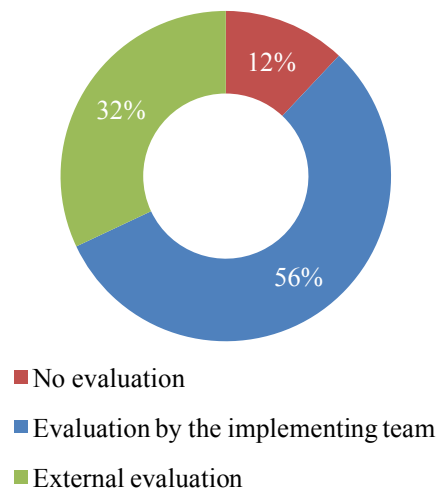Figure 6. Systematic evaluation
Note: Prepared by the author.

Figure 7. Who evaluates?
Note: Prepared by the author.

But how is this evaluation undertaken? In the majority of cases (56% of the practices in figure 7), the evaluation is undertaken by the implementing team itself. In some cases (8 out of 25, representing a 32%) the organizations have opted for an external evaluation. This datum does not mean that these 8 organisations do always undertake external evaluations, but that, at least once, they have evaluated comprehensively a practice with a team of external evaluators.

As reflected in figure 8, the content of the evaluation is diversified: a bit less than one third of the practices (28%) use evaluation forms to assess satisfaction or perception (i.e. How much did you like the training? To what extent do you feel you are better prepared to deal with conflicts in your classroom?), which means that evaluation is done by the participants of the trainings themselves. One third of the evaluations (28%) observe the performance of teachers' attitudes and behaviours through pre-defined indicators. The rest of the evaluated activities (32%, the same 32% than in Table 6), are external evaluations, and mostly measured by tests, or a combination of tests and other evaluation techniques as focus groups, documents and data analysis.

Most of the times, evaluation is undertaken right away, when trainings are about to finish. In a few cases, thought, a long-term evaluation is also done. It is the case of the Forum for Freedom in Education, which distributes forms several years after participants finish the course, so as to assess the participants' competences dealing with conflicts, the competences of the students they are working with and the situation at the schools they work in.
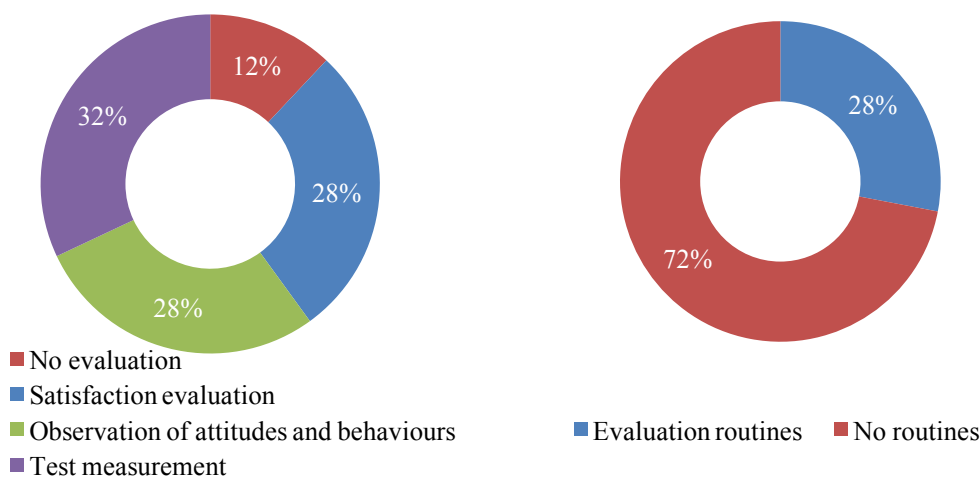

Figure 8. Kind of undertaken evaluation
Note: Prepared by the author.

Figure 9. Evaluation routines
Note: Prepared by the author.

Also, 28% of the organizations do set periodic spaces for group evaluations, setting routines that allow on-going evaluation (figure 9). In some cases, evaluation routines involve different actors (students, teachers' peer observation, and families) in different formats. A quite common way to do evaluation with students are circle speeches, were daily or weekly, students are asked to talk about coexistence in the classroom. In the case of teacher evaluation routines, they usually take place once a week.
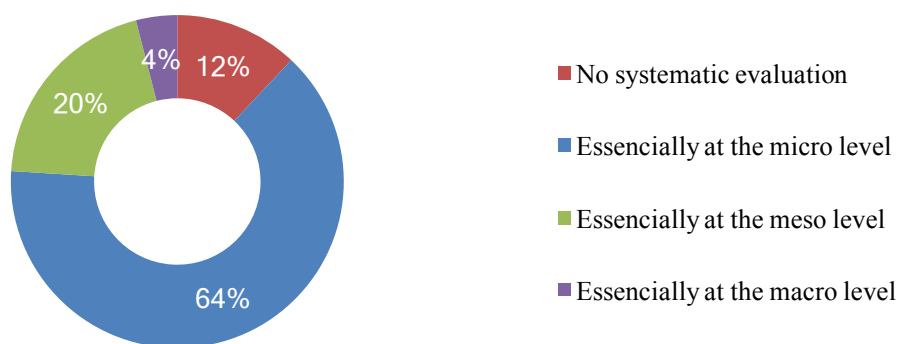

Figure 10. Level of transformation
Note: Prepared by the author.

More than two thirds of the practices (64%) evaluate only attitudes and behaviours at the micro level (figure 10[3]). Another 20% takes into account, in addition, indicators which provide information about the extent in which the school has also been changed structurally. Finally, only 4% of the analyzed practices (only one practice out of 25) have defined indicators to assess how their practice transforms the neighbourhood.

Each of these levels (micro, meso, macro), as it could be expected, show different levels of accomplishment:

At the micro level, plenty of positive results are reported. Surprisingly, indicators measuring the acquisition of knowledge are rather rare. Some examples refer to the knowledge of students of the rules of the school (Léon Jouhaux), or an improved capacity (from 45% of the students to 70% of them six months later) to recognise different attitudes in a conflict (competition, withdrawal, accommodation or collaboration) in fictional case studies.

Contrarily, many figures show significant results on enforcement of conflict transformation skills and attitudes. Regarding skills, some of the achieved results refer to a greater feeling of security in dealing with conflicts (80%) (Skollande); An increased understanding of communication that facilitates learning (78%) (Skollande); 80% of participants reporting a greater confidence about speaking and performing in front of others improved (Deep Black); Being more innovative and better at problem solving (Káva); Being significantly more tolerant towards both minorities and foreigners (Káva); Being more empathetic (Káva); Being more able to change their perspective (Káva); 90% of the students were able to distinguish a fact from a judgment in June 2012, compared to only 30% in September 2011 (Graines de Médiateurs); Increasing the students capacity to express their feelings (students can use 6 to 8 different words to describe their feelings in very precise situations, which represents a 10% rise) (Graines de Médiateurs).

Regarding attitudes, some indicators refer to a higher capacity of children to find their own solutions thanks to a less intrusive maieutic/questioning approach by teachers (CPP), or the initiative of students in the school participation channels and the respect for its procedures (Léon Jouhaux school).

Peace and conflict education objectives at the meso level refer to the establishment of school protocols, and to the setting of a caring environment. The results and impacts regarding these objectives show that the adequacy and the effectiveness of the school protocols are hardly assessed. Most of the indicators, instead, refer to the modelling of a less violent and more caring environment – with a stronger emphasis in the reduction of violence than in the positive peace approach.

Some of the identified impacts at the school (meso) level refer to: A reduction in the number of bullying situations and other interpersonal conflicts[4] (Graines de médiateurs,

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[3] To know what results and impacts are considered as micro, meso or macro, refer to table 1.

[4] Considering the reduction in the number of conflicts as a positive result is controversial. All the practices included in this research, as mentioned above in this article, consider conflict as an opportunity rather than as a problem. For this reason, it can be contradictory to consider the reduction of the number of conflicts as a positive result. A more precise indicator could be appropriate, such as "a higher percentage of conflicts are dealt with in a constructive way". In the Université de Paix practice, for example, teachers estimate that 77% of the conflicts are solved positively, when the figure was only 57% before the start of the project. Other indicators may be the reduction of time to deal with conflicts, or the negative or positive feelings felt while dealing with conflicts.

Transforming Conflict); A significant reduction of disciplinary hearings and expulsions (Génération Médiateurs); A lesser use of detentions and merit awards to control behaviours, parallel to an increase in the pupil's self-regulation (RAEEP, Transforming Conflict); A decrease in staff absenteeism (Transforming Conflict); An increase in pupils' school attendance (Transforming Conflict); An improved climate of peaceful coexistence and more caring environment (Génération Médiateurs, RAEEP, Transforming Conflict); A greater commitment by everyone to taking the time to listen to one another (Transforming Conflict); An effective functioning of school councils in which pupils themselves take relevant decisions over school issues (Léon Jouhaux).

It is also interesting to observe that the figures referring to the number of conflicts can be very different depending on how this information is collected: perception assessments show a much larger decrease in the number of conflicts than in positivistic measurements of the number of conflicts: Graines de Médiateurs' evaluations observe that school principals perceive that the number of conflicts between children has diminished by 50% between the beginning and the end of the year.

Other researches which include observation with control groups (Ariel Trust, UNICEF-HR) see much less obvious positive impacts, or even some deterioration. A possible explanation of this mismatch is that after being trained, teachers and principals become so used to conflicts that they do not conceive it as such a challenge, and consequently, reduce their perception of frequency. The teachers and principals change of perspective towards a better acceptance of conflicts can also be considered as a positive impact.

At the macro level, objectives referred to the establishment of community network, and to social impacts such as a decrease in community violence. Whish are the results and impacts associated to such objectives?

The establishment of community networks can be considered a positive indicator in itself. Forum for Freedom in Education, RAEEP and UNICEF-HR projects have contributed to the establishment of such networks, strengthening its school members. The lack of longevity of the network has been considered as a shortcoming in one of the projects, while its maintenance as a positive indicator in the other two projects.

Social impacts at the macro level have been proved by indicators such as: A decrease of 78% of the referrals to the Youth Offending Service; A reduction of 48% of anti-social behaviour attributable to young people (Transforming Conflict), or the fact that students organize awareness raising activities in the street and are able to defend their arguments with bystanders (Káva).

Evaluation of peace and conflict education seems to be a common practice. Although some improvements would need to be done (evaluation of 100% of the practices and a higher percentage of organizations that promote, at least from time to time, external evaluations), this practice permits to have a closer idea of what is being achieved, what works well, and what can be improved.

A big variety of results are assessed and reached, either based on positivistic measurement, on observation, or on perception. The analysis of the indicators points out that most of the analysed results refer to the micro level, while results at the meso-school level and macro level are assessed in a much lesser extent. Considering that the analysis of objectives showed less objectives at the meso (23,9%) and macro level (9%), it is not surprising to have less indicators at those levels, too. Other reasons could be

deduced to explain this inferior proportion of meso and macro indicators, such as a habit lesser frequent to evaluate these levels, and therefore a bigger difficulty in finding such indicators, and a lesser conscience of the impact of the project at those levels.

This reality makes it difficult to assess the impact on the level of violence at schools, or on the degree schools are turned into more democratic institutions, as too few practices assess those issues. In the analysed practices, the decrease of violence was not sufficiently significant, and the democratization of schools was not analysed, at least in such terms. Peace education practices would need, therefore, to be more aware of their influence, at least, at the meso level, and assess that more systematically.

3.4. Strengths of the practices as lessons learnt

The strengths identified in the practices of the Conflict Matters Online Platform are external appreciations: this means that while the rest of the information is written both by external researchers and by the practitioners themselves, the "strengths" are defined solely by external researchers, after analyzing the practices, and in some cases, after discussing them with the practitioners themselves.

While the identified strengths of the practices vary quite a lot from one practice to the other, some are found repeatedly. The main lessons learnt, built from analyzing the strengths of every practice, are:

- Early age empowerment: Introducing infants to self-esteem, self-awareness, identity, among other skills is an effective way to empower infants from scratch to transform conflicts by themselves. As concluded by CPP, children solve better their conflicts without the intervention of adults, so an effective approach is that educators intervene as less as possible in conflict crisis, and at the same time to train personal skills pre-emptively (provention). In that sense, De Kleine Berg and Atelier de la Petite Enfance kindergartens, which focus on empowering babies to say no, to express their feelings, and to respect each other's needs, are good examples of this early age empowerment.

- Initial simplicity: Practices than can offer a simple way of applying tools "for beginners" have the added value to motivate new teachers and schools to involve themselves in longer and more complex processes, starting from small and simple changes (Skollande, Léon Jouhaux primary School, University of Osijek among others). NonViolent Communication which starts from a very basic communication tool, but which imply much deeper contents, and Youth Town trainings which are brief and intense can motivate teachers to do a first rewarding step, with probable follow-up.

- Methods which involve emotions: The methodologies that reach a greater impact on the participants –whether these are students, teachers, staff or families– do usually stir up emotions. The use of socio-affective activities (Escola de Cultura de Pau, Université de Paix), controversial issues (Káva, Planpolitik, New Bridge), fiction stories that explain moving stories close to the participants' experiences (Káva, Ariel Trust) are examples of methods which involve emotions, for a deeper impact of learning.

- Continuous teacher training: Teacher training is present in almost all the practices, but some plan this training in a very long term (Graines de Médiateurs and CPP, for example, have a two-year long teacher training

program), others have several short-term trainings (RAEEP), or include action research analyzing the implementation of conflict resolution and transformation measures in their own practices (Forum for Freedom in Education).

- Leading team in the school: Appointing staff responsible for promoting a specific approach is an effective mechanism towards a more structural intervention. New Bridge Integrated School has a group of teachers in charge of developing materials, promoting teacher training about controversial issues, and selecting key activities for all teachers. This allowed the school to mainstream their controversial issues approach as a whole-school approach.

- School protocols, templates, guidelines, sets of activities: To enlarge the scope of the practice, and to contribute to make it more sustainable, actions such as defining school protocols, designing guidelines, activities, templates and other products to be applied by all the educators and staff are another effective way for a more structural reach. Ariel Trust's actions, for example, offers guidance resources for the school so that it can apply a protocol regarding abusive relationships, for the staff on how to deal with pupils (Dos and Don'ts) and templates to report cases of physical or psychological abuse. New Bridge integrated school has collected sets of activities to address controversial issues so that teachers use common methods.

- Networking with external actors and governmental mechanisms (Ariel Trust, RAEEP): To ensure a longer sustainability, and to make policy makers accountable of peace and conflict education policies, some practices tie links with public bodies, and/or have an explicit objective to weave nets: Ariel Trust aims at students to be able to build support networks to respond to domestic abuse or controlling behaviour, RAEEP is a network of schools in itself. Conversely, the Basque Plan for Peace education launched by the Basque regional government issues calls for grants addressed to civil society organization and to universities to involve as much actors as possible in the development of the policy.

- Global perspective on socially relevant topics: Some organisations, such as Planpolitik, Káva, New Bridge integrated school and Rogers school, succeed in introducing culture of peace related socially relevant topics into the classroom. While some of those organisations proposed their own agendas to students, others consult them to introduce issues that are relevant to them. This has allowed those practices to introduce in schools subjects such as the refugee issue, migrant discriminations, the Northern Ireland-North of Ireland armed conflict, climate change, etc.

- Evaluation routines: Institutional evaluation routines (Cappont, Rogers school, Tierlantuin) (see more about evaluation routines above) seem to be the most effective way to promote reflective practice in an ongoing way, to take decisions to improve practice and to promote a culture of social change in the schools. This should be combined with periodic deep evaluations conducted by external actors, to assess the achieved changes, and also to contribute to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organisations' approaches.

These are some of the learning from the analysed good practices. Considering that these nine aspects are common in several of these practices, it can make sense to consider if any of these can be incorporated in the own practice to strengthen it.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis of the mentioned 25 peace and conflict education programs has, of course, some limitations. It is a very small sample of what is being done, and it has not been chosen randomly, but selecting practices that are considered "good practices". All of them are also European, and implemented in context with relatively low levels of tension or violence. All these elements, without a doubt, bias the conclusions of this article. Also, a variety of practices, teaching methodologies, evaluation approaches and indicators have been considered on an equal footing. Although this has been argued initially referring to Morin's dialectical principle, it is also true that comparing diverse realities might also affect some conclusions.

Despite these limits of the research, some observations are still valid and useful both for researchers and practitioners. The analysed practices show a high variety of objectives, targets and approaches. They also demonstrate, through different evaluation techniques, their effectiveness, especially at the personal and relational level. Evaluation seems to be a widespread practice in the micro level, in a lesser extent at the meso and in a far lesser extent at the macro level. For this reason, there is no sufficient information to reach conclusions about the contribution of the analysed peace and conflict education practices to SDG16.

It is possible to state, then, that the analysed peace and conflict education programs do have a positive result in the way conflicts are dealt with, but not a clear impact in the reduction of violence (SDG16.1 and SDG16.2). Also, some of these practices (23,9% according to their objectives) aim at influencing the school's institution (SDG16.6 and SDG16.7), but more needs to be done and to be evaluated in that respect.

The main applicability of this article is the invitation to consider in a more conscious manner the meso and macro dimensions of the peace and conflict education projects to better assess the linkage between the interpersonal and the large peace dimensions. The examples of objectives and indicators at these levels, detailed in this article can be inspirational in that regard. In parallel, and regarding SDG16, the article suggests the importance of addressing more explicitly violence reduction, and the participation of students in schools' decisions and beyond.

Still, some challenges remain unresolved, or, at least, insufficiently resolved, and would require further investigations and debate. Indeed, the close examination of the analysed practices, point out some issues relevant to the SDG16 that are hardly present in the evaluations. Some of these challenges are:

Firstly, a broader definition of school violence needs to be applied in projects implementation and evaluation. Many organisations consider violence defined in a broad way (following classic Galtung's typology of direct, structural and cultural violence), but then define evaluation indicators almost exclusively about direct violence. This is the case for the majority of organisations, and also the case of the SDG, at least when it comes to use the term "violence". Defining indicators to monitor cultural and structural

violence at schools might be a good starting point to draw attention to meso-school level indicators.

In parallel, further research needs to be undertaken regarding the impact of the projects in institutionalizing peace and conflict education at the school level. SDG16.6 and SDG16.7 define several targets to get transparent and non-corrupt institutions. The focus of the majority of practices on skills development does not exclude the fact that several practices implement initiatives to define school coexistence plans, to apply school protocols for violence prevention or to enforce student participation channels. But these initiatives are rarely defined as an objective and are hardly assessed. While this article has estimated the weight of objectives at the meso-school level (23,9%) and identified some indicators to measure results in that regard, more research would be useful to assess more deeply the effectiveness of such practices, and to identify good practices.

Finally, Morin's hologramatic principle, mentioned in the methodological chapter, invites to investigate how the part influences the whole and vice versa. This article has analyzed mostly how projects can influence the context by decreasing violence and creating more participative institutions. But it hasn't analysed sufficiently how the context influences projects. Further research could explore which educational policies contribute to better peace and conflict education programs.

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