

Peace Education in schools of Armenia (2011-2013)

Project midterm report

Objective 2. To decrease the number of violent conflicts in schools of Armenia through educating teachers from 11 provinces of Armenia; lobbying and advocacy for integration Peace and Conflicts Resolution Education in school curriculum.

With the goal of evaluating the progress of the project, the results of both pre- and post-surveys conducted among more than 2670 pupils from 32 schools of Armenia were analyzed and compared.

Pre- survey questionnaire included several questions with the following goals:

- ☐ To identify specific observations of pupils on the cases of violence happening in their own or their peers' environment.*
- ☐ To evaluate the conflicts and personal behavior in the conflict situation.*
- ☐ To respond to the question – who is more frequently interfering in conflict resolution, and others (See, pre- survey questionnaire Annex 1)*

Post- survey questionnaire contained the same questions with the following of goals:

- ☐ To evaluate pupil's behaviour change in conflict situations right after taking peace lessons.*
- ☐ To collect information about what kind of difficulties the pupils faced while applying the skills gained during the peace lessons.*
- ☐ To clarify what was the most impressive and memorable for the pupils while taking peace lessons. (See, post- survey questionnaire Annex 2).*

The analysis showed that prior to conducting peace and conflict resolution lessons during class heads' hours, to the question "What form of violence have you more

frequently encountered during the conflicts occurring between the pupils: physical, verbal or indirect (making the child leave the group, offending the child, etc)?”, 8.7% of pupils responded physical, 30.6% - verbal, and 6.5% reported indirect cases of violence. To the question “How do you behave when you are directly involved in a conflict?”, only 6% of the respondent pupils answered that they use physical violence, 13% - verbal, and 3% - indirect violence. As it can be noticed, pupils have various approaches towards assessing their own and their peers’ behavior during conflicts. This outcome can be explained from psychological point of view: such sensitive issue as human behavior during conflict situations sometimes “makes” people “lie”. Young people are more likely to notice violent behavior of their friends during conflict situations, rather than the mistakes in their own behavior. (See Annex 3)

To the question “Who is mainly interfering to resolve conflicts occurring between pupils?”, responses provided by teachers and schoolchildren were nearly the same. Both teachers and pupils replied that during conflicts in 70-90% of the cases class head is the one to interfere, in less cases – 5-10% other teachers or the school principal, in 3-4% of cases – the parents, and other pupils in 25-30% of the cases. This once again proves the importance of training class heads and pupils in conflict management. (See Annex 4)

The results of pupils’ pre- and post- survey responses were also compared. The analysis showed that right after the peace lessons pupils observe tangible positive changes in terms of reducing the number of conflicts with violent outcomes both among their peers and in their own behaviour.

Training participant teachers were also assigned to respond to the same questions as the pupils prior to the trainings, such as: “What form of violence have you more frequently encountered during the conflicts occurring between the pupils: physical, verbal or indirect?” The analysis showed that 13% of the respondent teachers witnessed physical violence during the conflicts occurring between the pupils, which is 4.3% less than the pupils’ response; verbal violence was observed by 20% of the teachers (10% less compared to the pupils’ response) and only 4% of teachers witnessed indirect violence, whereas the pupil’s response was 6.5%.

Teachers’ and pupils’ responses are different in general, because the perception of the abovementioned issues is very subjective. The first reaction when asked a

question about a conflict is: “there are almost no conflicts in our class”, or “they happen very seldom”. Sometimes teachers think that speaking about conflicts may have a “negative effect” on his/her reputation. There have even been cases, when they have made changes on the questionnaires filled out by pupils, in order to reduce the number of violent conflicts from the actual figure provided by them.

However, when they engage in discussions and start to bring various examples of the conflicts happening in their schools, classrooms and general environment, the real picture becomes clear. In order to obtain rather honest responses and for evaluating the impact of peace education, meetings and discussions were organized with teachers upon the completion of the trainings conducted in the provinces. During the meetings they shared their experience in conducting peace lessons and filled out questionnaires by responding to the following questions:

1. Have you noticed any change/positive impact among the pupils of the class you are leading, which you would link to Peace and Conflict Resolution classes? Please provide your answers in numerical or percentage values, and bring examples.
2. Was there any feedback from parents or teachers to prove behavioral change of the class in general, and conflicting pupils in particular?
3. Do you trust that this education will be helpful for pupils in their future?

Analysis of the questionnaires provided us with many examples proving the tendency of reduction of the number of conflicts with violent outcomes among schoolchildren due to the peace education. It also allowed for evaluating parents’ and teachers’ approach towards peace education and stressed out the importance of such education in the children’s future. Presented examples are very catchy, and we have been anticipating the achieved results.

After comparing the percentage variation between the number of conflicts with violent outcomes provided by teachers and pupils during the pre- survey and later upon the completion of the training, we conclude that the number of conflicts with violent outcomes have decreased by 62% after peace and conflict resolution classes (initially we have targeted at 20%). In order to confirm this result it will be necessary to conduct monitoring during the following academic year as well. It will be necessary to ask similar questions to the pupils in order to reassess how stable their gained knowledge in conflict resolution is, and to what extent that knowledge has transformed to skills.



Pre- survey questionnaire

Questionnaire for the schoolchildren

School and grade

Region, city/village

Date

1. Do you know what a conflict is?

Yes No

2. Do you notice that conflicts occur occasionally among your classmates?

often rarely never

3. Do you personally find yourself in a conflict with other students?

often rarely never

4. During the conflicts among schoolchildren, have you often noticed:

a) physical violence (beating, causing physical injury, and etc.)

often rarely never

b) verbal violence (abuse, threat, irony and etc.)

often rarely never

c.) non direct violence (excluding the child from the group, a child's defamation and etc.)

often rarely never

5. Who does often interfere/mediate in order to solve the conflicts among schoolchildren? .

other student (s) one of the teachers class head teacher no one

principle/vice principle the parent(s) sister/brother

6. How effective do you think teachers' actions are to solve the conflicts occurred among schoolchildren?

very effective less effective not effective at all

7. Have you personally ever helped to find solutions to solve the conflicts among schoolchildren?

Yes No

8. What do you do when you are in a conflict situation?

a) physical violence (beating, causing physical injury, and etc.)

often rarely never

b) verbal violence (abuse, threat, irony and etc.)

often rarely never

c) non-direct violence (excluding the child from the group, a child's defamation and etc.)

often rarely never

Thank you!



Post- survey questionnaire

Questionnaire for schoolchildren

School and grade -----

Region, city/village -----

Date -----

1. After the peace classes, do you notice that conflicts often occur among your classmates?

often rarely never

2. After the peace classes, do you personally often get involved in conflicts with other schoolchildren?

often rarely never

3. After the peace classes, in conflict situations among schoolchildren do you often notice

a) physical violence (beating, causing physical injury, and etc.)

often rarely never

b) verbal violence (abuse, threat, irony and etc.)

often rarely never

c.) non-direct violence (excluding the child from the group, a child's defamation and etc.)

often rarely never

4. After the peace classes, what do you do when you are personally involved in a conflict?

a) physical violence (beating, causing physical injury, and etc.)

often rarely never

b) verbal violence (abuse, threat, irony and etc.)

often rarely never

c.) non-direct violence (excluding the child from the group, a child's defamation and etc.)

often rarely never

5. Which of the conflict resolution skill(s) are the most effective for you? /you can choose more one/

Be responsible for your behavior, your thoughts and feelings.

There is no need to expand the argument, speak about the specific issue.

Do not put a "name" on people.

Do not make a decision while you are angry.

The behavior of the opposite side should not dictate your behavior.

There is no need to point out people's opinion.

Everyone has the right to choose. You should respect others' values.

Express your feelings without threatening.

6. What kind of problems did you face while using the skills gained during the peace classes?

7. What was the most impressive thing during the peace classes?

Thank you!

