

EDUCATION OF TODAY IS THE SECURITY OF TOMORROW!

Strengthening the Capacities to Create Secure Environments with Cultural Education

Raphael Vergin
Culture for Peace
vergin@culture-for-peace.org / raphael.vergin@gmail.com

Dr. Hannah Reich
Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) / Berghof Foundation/Peace Education
reich@ifa.de / hannahreich@googlemail.com

Abstract

Human security as a people's perspective on security with a focus on human well-being and relationship-building offers promising alternative concepts to state-centered and structure-focused security strategies. Security is more than increasing weapons, fences and survey cameras. To our understanding, it is something else and involves entirely different mindsets. It demands a people's perspective on security in which citizenship includes the capacity to create secure surroundings. People can be supported to "learn" security and to focus on their capacities. The subjective dimensions of security, including a person's emotional management, can be trained.

This is why we argue that three dimensions of training have to be integrated into educational approaches. First among these dimensions is tackling cultural violence through working on stereotypes and prejudices by delivering knowledge and information. Second is fostering knowledge about relationship-building and building relationships across the social divide. And third is strengthening the self-esteem of the citizens and focusing on their personal development and well-being. Hence, new approaches of experience-based learning and group work have to be integrated into the formal and informal curricula.

Thus, we advocate for enriching formal and informal education with training modules in "peace and security"—training for everybody, so that our education of today makes us ready for the threats of tomorrow. We argue further that this can only be accomplished if experience-based methodological tools, such as interactive theater, are included in these trainings.

Keywords

conflict transformation, interactive theatre, healing, resilience, mediation

About the Authors

Raphael Vergin is co-founder and director of Culture for Peace—a German-based NGO with projects in Nepal and Berlin, Germany. He holds a masters degree in political science and American studies from Johan-Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany and is currently co-project-coordinator of a joint venture project with inmedio berlin and Sha:re Center Chitwan (Nepal). The project focuses on intergroup relationship-building, dialogue and the reintegration of former combatants into the communities throughout Nepal. Vergin works as a trainer, coach, and mediator and is particularly interested in the fields of culture and conflict, ethno-political conflicts, dealing with the past, storytelling, and security from a people's perspective.

Hannah Reich works, trains, and researches in the area of conflict transformation, peace education and participatory arts. She works in the Institut für Auslandbeziehung (ifa) within the area called “partnerships for transformation” with the Arab world as well as a freelancer in the field of Drama education and peacebuilding. Currently, she is part of the leading team of the project, “Non-violent and civic education in Jordan” of the Berghof Foundation, where she is responsible for the implementation of the project's interactive theater part. She holds an MA in Islamic Societies and Cultures, School of Oriental and African Studies, London and wrote her PhD as action research about the potential of interactive theater for peace building and social well-being.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is in crisis. The question of how to create a secure environment is of concern to all of us on this globe. There has been a lot of discussion about how the state can guarantee the security of its citizens. This is no doubt its responsibility. Yet, in the light of many fragile states and violent conflicts with vast human displacement and destruction, the twenty-first century seems to demand a broader perspective on security. This includes all citizens. The concept of human security offers such a broad perspective because it brings the people into focus. To comprehend human security as security from a people's perspective can be challenging. Human security has been a means of justification for economic sanctions or military interventions by states. However, we believe it is a fruitful term to emphasize the people's perspective and situate our argument in this framework.¹ A people's perspective on security with a focus on human well-being and relationship-building offers promising alternative concepts to state-centered and structure-focused security strategies.

Security is more than increasing weapons, fences and survey cameras. To our understanding, it is something else and involves entirely different mindsets. The potential to define and to train these mindsets is not sufficiently taken into consideration. Hence, new approaches of experience-based learning and group work have to be integrated into the formal and informal curricula, especially in those of civic education and peace-building. This will strengthen the capacities of the individual to overcome a crisis and navigate through insecure surroundings. But what exactly could such training look like?

Interactive theater² as an arts-based approach to conflict transformation is used in post-war countries to foster social change, empowerment, learning and knowledge creation (Thompson; Shank/Schirch; Bteich/Reich; Eichhorn; Reich). In these often fragile and insecure surroundings, it is crucial to strengthen people's sense of security and to foster relationship-building between parties formerly in conflict. The experience of using cultural tools for post-war peace building can be used to enrich the approach and methodology of security and protection training manuals. We identify the need to develop these protection manuals further, to include more experience-based modules and thus to integrate a more holistic approach.³

Both a more holistic approach to security and interactive arts as an educational tool lack sufficient recognition in the debate on how to create a secure environment. Further, the question of how to create security is only randomly positioned in the educational realm. This is due to the fact that security is depicted as something objectively given. Its subjective dimension,

which depends on the information at hand as much as on the personal state of being, is not the main focus. The same is true for the cultural dimension of security. The *cultural patterns of meaning* give hints about what to define as threatening and dangerous. They have an effect on what kind of people we trust and what kind of actions we choose. To consider the subjective and the cultural dimension as an integral part of holistic training approaches, offers a significant potential to create a more secure environment.

Democracy needs democrats. Democratic citizens are not born as such. They are born and raised in participatory social settings—in democratic cultures. Their socialization does not serve as a substitute for the state institutions. Rather, it gives substance to the democratic structures. This also applies to the question of security: security needs citizens as *securing citizens*. These are born, raised, and trained in participatory, safe, and appreciating settings. Here, humans discover their potentials for agency in crises, their visions and their convictions. These are educational settings in which people on the one hand improve technique and technical skill on how to wage conflicts constructively (e.g., recognizing needs, handling emotional imbalance etc.). On the other hand, they are constantly challenged within these settings to work on themselves, on their personal development. We thus advocate enriching formal and informal education with training modules in “peace and security education.” These we understand as “training for everybody,” fully aware that their impact will need some time to be measurable. A holistic security education approach will make us ready for the threats of tomorrow.

To explain why such training spaces are needed and what they could look like, we will discuss different aspects of our practical experience, e.g., those as peace workers and trainers in postwar regions (Middle East, Nepal). Our insights will exemplify how *securing citizens* can be supported in insecure surroundings. To this end, we will elaborate on the importance and interrelatedness of relationship-building, mindsets, and self-awareness and then point to cultural tools such as interactive theater to develop these skills. We link our different experiences from the field because we realize that they all emphasize a specific and unique “Art of Seeing” the world and oneself. This “Art of Seeing” is observing one’s own thoughts and feelings yet at the same being totally present in the moment, i.e., engaged in perceiving reality with all the five senses. This mode (and skill) of interpreting life and acting according to these interpretations demands self-confidence, self-awareness, mindfulness of one’s patterns of feeling, thinking, talking and acting. A sense of security—this is one of our main arguments—is encouraged by such conscious perception of reality and such regardful, intra- and interpersonal relationship-building.

In the following, we will first set the framework of our ideas by deepening the concept of human security. Then we will discuss how the international non-governmental organization (INGO) peace brigades international (pbi) contributes to create human security and *securing citizens*. We will show which of its tools, principles, and experiences should be particularly considered to be included in more holistic protection approaches and security training. Finally, we will discuss in depth the role of interactive theater in creating human security and *securing citizens*. Interactive theater holds great potential for the transformation of unhelpful, unconscious mindsets and habitual interactions through experiences on stage. Altogether, we will reason why and how the formal and informal educational systems should be broadened and enriched through “peace and security education.”

2. HUMAN SECURITY AND THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The concept of human security refers to the security of the individual as opposed to the security of the state. Human security thus challenges traditional, state-centered conceptions of security that emphasize territorial integrity, sovereignty and the role of the military. Newman points out that it addresses different dimensions of security in the life of human beings, with a normative orientation towards the fulfillment of fundamental individual needs and human rights (78–79).⁴ To keep it practical and relevant to the conflict transformation field, we incorporate our training approach into a narrow conception of human security that focuses mainly on security from the threat of violence (freedom from fear).

The state has the legal monopoly over the legitimate means of violence. Hobbes’ political Leviathan saves us from the war of each against all and allows for economic, socio-cultural, and political life to flourish. But what if the state fails to sufficiently safeguard the rights of its citizens? What if the institutions of the state—be it military, police forces, or other security agencies—exert violence themselves? While the state, as Newman writes, “remains the central provider of security in ideal circumstances” (79), human security as a people-centered bottom-up approach equally highlights the responsibility of the people: People are responsible in the sense that the development of supportive social networks, the dismantling of stereotypes, and the building of trust across social divides depend on people. This, as much as the emotional management (well-being) of the individual, a sense of belonging and a meaningful system of values and belief, strengthens people’s capacities to feel secure and thus to handle conflicts non-violently and creatively.

3. SECURITY THROUGH SHIFTING MINDSETS AND RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING

We are all artists, said Pablo Picasso figuratively. And with Shakespeare we can add: The world is a stage. In peace studies and practice, these views are reflected in Lederach who envisions peace-building predominantly as a creative act with a stress on intra- and interpersonal relationship-building. A shift in mindset beyond a linear, problem-solving technique and rational analysis opens up possibilities to create space for imagination, intuition and genuine relationship-building (65–75). The questions we will address in this paper are: 1) how can we connect deeply enough with the people involved in a conflict to encourage their emotional management of a certain (security) situation and to strengthen their self-confidence and sense of belonging? 2) how can we contribute to the creation of a space free from paralyzing fear, in which trust and creativity can emerge? 3) how can we strengthen human capacities to create secure environments needed for social and individual health?

Raphael Vergin experienced, as a volunteer and project consultant with the INGO peace brigades international (pbi), how an international human rights organization contributes to create human security. Within insecure surroundings, pbi works to protect threatened human rights defenders (HRD). The core of pbi services is international physical accompaniment. If requested by local, non-violent actors, pbi volunteers escort threatened people working in conflict-afflicted areas to create the space they need to do their work, e.g., filing cases of human rights violations, fact-finding missions in remote and often fragile areas. Protection is enhanced when pbi-facilitated international support networks are active and politically committed and when the political costs of violent action work as a deterrent to potential aggressors. Strong civil society linkages and good working relationships to (local) state authorities and security forces add to a dense human security network.

The pbi German website quotes Huepa, a Columbian HRD: “We suffered threats, murder, displacement [...] and stigmatization. Through the solidarity and support of the pbi-volunteers, we succeeded in creating safe spaces.”⁵ It is important to note that Huepa recognizes himself as responsible for the creation of a secure environment—as a *securing citizen*.

While pbi supports local human security mechanisms, pbi partner organizations and/or individuals still, to a large extent, remain the agents of their own security. In threat and risk assessments for example, pbi teams evaluate the partners’ own capacities to contribute to their security, i.e., potential safe houses, social and professional support networks, travel and communication plans or online security awareness. Security training offered by pbi then increases knowledge and capacities to minimize vulnerabilities for potential attacks. By thus strengthening people’s awareness to be responsible for their security, pbi directly contributes

to changing people's mindsets. In addition, a unique set of principles (indirectly) affects mindsets and relationship-building and thus again enhances agency of security: a) *non-interference* (into the partners' work) fosters self-determination as well as autonomous thinking and self-reliant decision-making of partners b) *non-partisanship* stresses open-mindedness to all parties in-conflict as well as a non-judgmental attitude, thus generating mutual dialogue across social divides, and finally c) the pbi commitment to *non-hierarchical approaches* and decision-making, results in genuine relationship-building. Therefore a process, rather than an outcome orientation and problem-solving technique, is encouraged.

While violence prone structures still significantly limit the scope for transformative agency, the pbi tool-kit offers an alternative approach to build human security. When state institutions fail to protect people and to ensure basic human rights, strong bonds to supportive networks become irreplaceable. Solidarity in general, as HRD Huepa labels the pbi engagement, describes a mindset of such relatedness or strong bonds. Most of us know how encouraging it feels in moments of personal crisis if we have our family and friends close to us. However, to describe this as physical help or emotional support is insufficient. Rather, if a true connection unfolds, a reality beyond expressible words can emerge, which protects. It protects because a caring and loving attitude has the unique potential to remind all of us that there is a safe womb we may still relate to.

Transferring this idea into a professional context, an example from *pbi Nepal* can illustrate the point: Jay Kishor Labh, a lawyer and human rights defender in search of justice and his disappeared son, faced severe threats from Nepalese state authorities and asked pbi for protection measures.⁶ In addition to the application of analytical protection tools and advocacy, significant value was placed on building a good relationship to the HRD. As threats increased, pbi-volunteers accompanied Jay day and night for several weeks. There was apparently a need to console him and to encourage his emotional management of the situation. One activity was to engage him in frequent chess games, at first simply to create moments of diversion. These games though became a resource of reflection on life for him and a unique source for deep connectedness between him and a team member. By starting to build trust long before the accompaniment and moreover inspired by a mindset of getting involved with each other with empathy, the space at the chess-board was filled with energy beyond words, a very private atmosphere of strong bonds.

The capacities to build such bonds, which evolve around attitudes of mindfulness, appreciation and the ability to change perspectives, can be trained. The experience did not take away Jay's pain of loss, the struggle, nor did it solve any of his long-term security problems. It did, however, create a space free from his paralyzing fear in which he was better able to relax his mind and to make decisions with more clarity.

In such extreme situations of insecurity, the HRDs as well as the pbi-volunteers have to deal with significant levels of stress. To cope with such constant stress, fear and psychological pressure, pbi needs to train and monitor the volunteers intensely (Behboud 12–17). In security trainings, the HRD's self-confidence, self-awareness and relationship-building skills are enhanced (Miller 1–2). In order to become *securing citizens*, a mindset that reflects responsibility for emotions, needs, actions and reactions is required.

For many HRDs, as Hartnagel states, it is difficult to speak about emotions such as fear. It implies a shift of identity—from supporter to being supported. This process often requires psycho-social support and spaces where participants feel enough trust to open up and let transformations happen. They can then engage in speaking about mistrust, excessive demands or their pain of being victimized themselves. In Columbia, pbi uses theater and other creative methods such as relaxation and meditation as tools to support the group work. Everyday situations and work scenarios are performed and reflected upon in order to develop a consciousness about the coping strategies each HRD possesses (Hartnagel). To know about your own resources creates self-confidence. And once participants let go of their inner resistance and relax, outlets often open, trust increases and spaces for creative exchange and intuitive solutions emerge. This inspiration in turn becomes conscious and finally transfers into knowledge. Knowledge again creates human security.

Another major tool used in the pbi human security context is Non-Violent Communication (NVC). Primarily a tool to deescalate verbal conflicts and engage in constructive conversation, NVC also helps to transform mindsets. Former modes of resentment can transform into mindsets characterized by appreciation of *the other* and of *myself*: If I am conscious and mindful, if I succeed in creating a peaceful, trustworthy relationship with *myself* first, with my own beasts and demons (anger, fear, aggression, animosity), it will be easier to understand the experiences and difficulties of *the other*. To value my inner antagonists as teachers that help to unmask and to transform patterns of negativity gives the potential to respond with compassion to actions, reactions and decisions taken by others. Maybe this compassion in consequence can pioneer forgiveness that transcends judgmental attitudes, and can contribute to rebuilding trust in war-torn societies. But what will a conflict victim such as Jay tell you when you ask him to visit some workshops to develop his consciousness and empathy to help forgive the murderer of his son, as is sometimes envisaged in some transitional justice processes?

From these ideas, we would like to distinguish our training approach and underline non-interference as a major principle for our understanding of conflict transformation. The focus for us is to empower conflict-affected people to bring

them closer to their own stories. This means we have to empower them as agents all the way through. Parallel to targeting interpersonal relationship-building, we have to strengthen people's capacities to engage in a healthy relationship with themselves. This includes mindsets and a sense of personal and spiritual growth. If we can then succeed in strengthening supportive social networks, solidarity and a sense of belonging to various communities, we have contributed to building a strong foundation to rebuild trust across social divides and to dismantle stereotypes.

The examples of pbi work show that a focus on specific mindsets, principles and methods (for example NVC), as well as on strong relationship-building contributes to create human security from a people's perspective. On the basis of these insights and interpretations, we believe that training approaches that aim to strengthen people's sense of security in insecure surroundings are very valuable. We believe that a stronger focus on questions of self-esteem, self-respect and personal development will strengthen securing relationships and should thus be considered strongly to be included into a holistic "peace and security education."

4. SECURITY THROUGH TRAINING WITH INTERACTIVE THEATER

In the following section we would like to contribute to the debate on strengthening human security by shedding light on the *aesthetic space of interactive theater* as a tool within "peace and security education." We do so to highlight two aspects, which we believe to be far underestimated in approaching security concerns: *Firstly*, we would like to link education— understood as a knowledge-generating practice—with security in a very direct way. Knowledge about the *other*, about *myself* and about the world creates security. The *second aspect*, in our view often underestimated in debates about security, is that any individual sense of (in)security is intimately bound up in the shifting relationships within her/his immediate community, particular in situations of war and crises. It is important to stress, because this perspective allows for a focus on the *missing of relationships*, the missing quality of relationships and a lack of a constructive conflict culture.⁷ This lack of a constructive conflict culture is addressed through our concept of a *securing citizenship* within the framework of human security.

People's sense of security can hardly be objectively measured. Rather, the feeling of (in-)security and the actions that ensue from such a perception are embedded in the *cultural maps of meaning*. They are also related to the given, particular threats of the physical, socio-economic, and socio-cultural environment. These *cultural maps of meaning* point to the image of the self in relation to *the other*, the perceived source of threat to one's security. It is in this light, that we would like to refer to a

particular set of experiences of Dr. Hannah Reich. She was involved in an action research project in postwar Lebanon that used the “aesthetic space” of interactive theater for peace building.⁸ She is particularly referring to the approach developed by Augusto Boal and David Diamond⁹ and—for this article— focusing on the tool of the *particular process structure* of Forum Theater.

The distinguishing features of Forum Theater can be summarized by four elements:

Firstly, it is theater with *lay persons*, working on the assumption that lay persons can be as authentic as professional actors. Secondly, this authenticity is achieved by enacting *real-life experiences*. Narrations based on real-life experiences are identified and collected through intensive group work with the participants. Thirdly, a theatrical piece deriving from the chosen narration is staged and presented in a *forum*. Thereby the storyline is depicted up to a certain point of crisis, after which the audience is invited to come on stage in a so-called intervention. Here, the audience enacts possibilities of transforming the crisis to a different end. Boal coined the term *spect-actor* to mark this special position, hyphenating the link between spectator and actor. Fourthly, every intervention is reflected upon in an open discussion in the forum. This discussion is facilitated by a so-called “*joker*.” In Forum Theater, the joker occupies a space in-between the audience and the actors, animating the audience to move from being spectators to become actors and encouraging the debate on people’s perceptions and interpretations of the crisis on the stage. The interactive performance is preceded by an intensive workshop phase, a very powerful *process-space*. It is in this phase where most hidden connections become conscious, where most of the “conscientization”—the broadening of the mindsets, perceptions and understandings—as well as the enrichment of the repertoire for engaging in conflicting situations constructively takes place. How does this work?

Interactive theater uses a specific *aesthetic space*. This space strengthens a special “Art of Seeing.” This is a very conscious mode of perceiving one self and the reality around oneself with all senses, in a non-judgmental way, in the full presence of the moment. The *aesthetic space* is created through the separation of a space into two realms: one from which one “sees,” and another which is “seen.” This separation line between the auditorium and the stage does not simply demarcate one part of the space as the visible space, as is the case in most public gatherings. Rather it singles out one part of the space—the stage—to be essentially different from the rest, coloring it with a different form of communication, which is governed by different social laws (e.g., everything you do on stage is decoded as acting, so, if you say, you are angry, or you want to kill somebody, you are not taken to be accountable after the show).

This separation of the space into two realms and the possibility to either go on stage and act or to be in the audience and observe, allows for a very conscious form of seeing. The auditorium-stage-partition transforms the stage into a place in which everything is amplified and intensified as if under a big telescope. The amplification intensifies the process of observing, perceiving, and recognizing. It allows people to *see* things which have become invisible in the mechanization of daily life. It is important to note that *seeing* here refers not only to employing the visual sense but also to hearing, smelling and even feeling and touching, to all the senses employed in any physical presence on stage.¹⁰ *Seeing* thus refers to perceiving with all senses and therefore, to looking at the scene on stage with your whole body.

In Forum Theater the separating line is blurred as people are not limited to staying in one fixed part, audience or stage. To encourage the movement of the audience to the stage and to foster the improvisation, a particular “Art of Seeing” is being activated. This allows the audience to become involved in the performance and to take action in the performed scene. Having been trained in the “Art of Seeing”—this is our experience—can contribute to become a *securing citizen*, because this seeing allows one to be more aware about the surrounding as well as about one’s actions, motions, and emotions. It fosters the opportunity not to be lost in thought, but fully present in the given situation and moment. The three most essential elements of “Art of Seeing” are:

(1) A shift from a judgmental to a *non-judgmental view of a certain behaviour or action* Only within an appreciating environment, the spect-actors come on stage and feel safe enough to open up and to present their inner knowledge. Further, only if the scene is observed without immediate judgement, is one able to recognize its inner logic and to identify moments where an intervention might bring about a change. This is activated by an alignment of the observed scene to the *observers’ own experience* to their own lives and relationships. To be involved, rather than to observe from a distance, fosters empathy.

After the intervention on stage, the joker facilitates a discussion on each intervention. Questions are asked with regards to observed changes. This process strengthens:

(2) The ability to be attentive to *small changes* (within the gaze, the attitude, the voice) and to highlight the effects of these changes on the situation as such. This allows for realizing possibilities for agency even in difficult situations, which can lead to a totally different outcome.

(3) The “Art of Seeing” recognizes and trains seeing as a very active act. It is a seeing which derives from a double position of consciousness: “I see and I see myself seeing, talking and acting.” This double position of consciousness allows participants to feel something but not to totally identify with what is felt. Instead, it helps to observe one’s feeling as part of a whole. This is a very securing seeing, because in the moment, where fear enters into the realm, the view is narrowed. With this narrow view possibilities of agency are easily ignored. Further, threats and danger can be seen, where there is

none. In contrast, this “Art of Seeing” allows one to calm down one’s own emotions by firstly being aware of them. Secondly, other skills like breathing techniques and body awareness are used to train participants not to get entangled into their emotions. To train this double position of consciousness we use various mediation techniques.

The situation unfolds differently, depending on how we look at it. How much this is true can be convincingly experienced on stage, where many people look at you. It feels different, if their look is empathic or judgmental. This active impact of seeing becomes very obvious in the moment of improvisation, where the actors on stage act from within the very moment. They immediately feel the difference between a passive, judging or even voyeuristic gazing audience to a non-judging, empathic appreciating audience and will realize how they are capable of offering new modes of agency, bathing in the gaze of an appreciating audience. The “Art of Seeing” allows the participants on stage to present hidden facets of themselves—safeguarded within a character—and to display intimate, incorporated practical knowledge of their relationships and interactions in presented situations. In the interventions and the discussions, contradictions are displayed while stereotypes, as well as prejudices, are challenged. The questions raised in the discussions contests the *grand narration* so present in conflict and crisis situations.

Interactive theater cannot foster a more equal distribution of wealth, negotiate peace agreements, or stop gun trade. However, violent conflicts and wars are culturally embedded and legitimized. Social fragmentation, the lack of knowledge about the *other*, the lack of self-confidence and a missing capacity to build relationships with others constitute an unhealthy conflict culture and point to a lack of *securing citizenship*. This has to be acknowledged as a real threat to peaceful coexistence.

To give an example, we would like to focus on postwar Lebanon and show how cultural tools are used to strengthen capacities for relationship-building and for freedom from fear. Relationships ideally can be like bridges across the social divide, and thus encourage a more secure society. The war and the massive displacement of people during the Lebanese War (1975–1990) along the confessional divide stipulated a settlement of the people into confessional uniform sections. It fostered inner group cohesions and a perceived distance from the *other*. Samir Khalaf has termed this development “geography of fear” (Khalaf 4) as another poignant consequence of protracted strife. The spaces of war and their “concomitant geographies of fear, started to assert their ferocious logic on public and private spaces” (Khalaf 248). This contributed to veritably creating a fragmentation of the country.¹¹ The displacement, the experience of violence and the *geography of fear* in consequence fostered the iteration of emotionally charged, aggressive confessional

loyalties. Khalaf explains this for the Lebanon of today, 20 years after the end of the civil war:

Lebanese are today brandishing their confessionalism, if we may use the dual metaphor, as both emblem and armor. Emblem, because confessional identity has become the most viable medium for asserting presence and securing vital needs and benefits. It is only when an individual is placed within a confessional context that his ideas and assertions are rendered meaningful or worthwhile. Armor, because it has become a shield against real or imagined threats. The more vulnerable the emblem, the thicker the armor. Conversely, the thicker the armor, the more vulnerable and paranoid other communities become. It is precisely this dialectic between threatened communities and the urge to seek shelter in cloistered worlds that has plagued Lebanon for so long. (Khalaf 27)

“Security” from a governance angle and an individual and communal sense of security are firmly intertwined with culturally informed patterns of meanings. In this case, it is the cultural norm that humans from other confessions are to be seen with suspicion and not as trustworthy as those from the same confession.¹² The above quotation further explains confessionalism as a mechanism employed by the Lebanese and the dilemma it creates: Deep confessional loyalties ensured that people could survive the brutalities of the civil war. For them it provided a semblance of security and meaning as well as a simplified ordering of social life in the midst of instability and the unintelligibility of war. Paradoxically, it is precisely these mechanisms which manifested a form of social fragmentation. This fragmentation is thus reinforcing the unstable surroundings by a lack of well-established relationships between the different groups.

In postwar Lebanon certain civil society organizations now aim at bridging the gap between the different confessional groups and support relationship-building across the social divide. *A step away*, for example, used interactive theater with youth from formerly conflicting parties to raise awareness about how confessionalism is shaping the daily interaction. They worked with a group of youth between 16 and 24 years old, which originate from a wide range of family and confessional backgrounds (Maronites, Sunnites, Shiites, Druze, and Greek Orthodox).¹³ The group toured across Lebanon and presented their Forum Theater production. The play consisted of four scenes, interweaving three different plots that deal with everyday occurrences in student life. The crises in the narrations derive from real-life experiences of the youth involved and relate to the restrictions in inter-confessional love relationships. The presented crises include difficulties in renting a room from someone belonging to a different confession and subtle discriminatory acts based on confessional prejudices in public spaces. The play tackled a tabooed contradiction: Although confessionalism is officially condemned, it is all-pervasive in practically every daily interaction. The fact that confessionalism is present in

every part of the society is not a new revelation. But the close observation and experience of this fact through its representation on stage brought about an entirely different realization of the phenomenon. As Hannah was told by participants in the group, realizing the subtle diffusion of confessionalism into daily interactions was an enormous eye opener. Thus, confessionalism became apparent, not only as an abstract attribute of group relations but as a phenomenon deeply engrained into the bodies, the attitudes and postures of the individuals. This shapes the personal mode of relating to others as well as larger social patterns of relationship-building.

To give a concrete example from one of the performances: during one scene in which students tried to rent a room, the neighboring friend of the flat owner was distrustfully scrutinizing the strangers. He feared that they might belong to a different confession from his. It was not necessary to verbalize the issue of confessionalism for the audience to understand, nor its direct impact on the perceived sense of (social and individual) security. It became sufficiently visible in the presentation and was also palpable for the participants of this process. While in daily interactions a disapproving gaze towards the other sect has to be hidden, its theatrical articulation, its subtle but explicit enactment, allowed for an acknowledgement of its presence within the personalities of the performers. As one of the participants mentioned later, it was through this scene that she became aware of how much her actions are shaped by the confessional ordering of the society in every interaction (Bteich/Reich 6).

Another issue displayed was the linkage between places and people of a particular confession. One scene took place in the university cafeteria which was by itself already structured into different groups by students belonging to different communities. A dialogue between two students developed into a love story which was abruptly stopped when the places of residency were revealed. The residency is influenced by one's confession. Usually this interrelation is taken for granted but was particularly highlighted in the scene. This common, unspoken knowledge in Lebanon was questioned by the interveners on stage. They asked about the deeper reasons behind these linkages and were curious about the inherent "geography of fear," the injustices such a division creates. The need to first find out the confession someone belongs to before any kind of interaction with a stranger can be pursued was thus telescopically enlarged and laid bare. This need, as well as the mistrusting gaze, can be seen as *survival strategies* in times of crises. Yet, having become internalized, they have become deeply ingrained in the individuals' bodies and perpetuate themselves in all encounters with "strangers." The result is fear of creating long-lasting, social relationships.

The experience of this need, the fear related to public space in Lebanon, as well as the acknowledgement of one's own behavior, points to a very different level

of *conscientization* than the one which is accessible through reading about the insights on confessionalism. The strength of the realization is very much bound to the particular context. The interactive performance is creating some kind of *in situ knowledge* gained by those participating, which is difficult to convey to other places and spaces.

What are the risks involved in such a knowledge-generating practice that relates to the aesthetic space and brings to the fore *in situ* knowledge from a conflict transformative point of view? A key figure in the interactive theater practice is the figure of the “joker,” the intermediary between spectators and the scene on stage. Through him, the “Art of Seeing” may be heightened or diminished. The joker moderates the process and initiates the movement from the presented social phenomenon to the social rules governing it. His/her task is to allow very different perspectives to be expressed, to set the pauses, to question and to give space for thoughts, comments and reflection. The joker incorporates a crucial and powerful position within the whole process, demanding special capacities. He has to be firmly rooted in the conventions of story-telling and narration present in that particular place. At the time, a personal distance from the story is demanded, an ability to scrutinize the situation and ask questions that provoke an awareness of hidden structures. The act of jokering is not simply talent, but can be trained. As the joker is often not only moderating the performance but also facilitating the group process that led to it, his craft has to be closely considered in the light of conflict transformation and “peace and security education.”

5. CONCLUSIONS

The example of Lebanon’s confessionalism is only one example of worldwide mindsets termed in peace and conflict studies as part of “cultural violence.” Cultural violence, the discrimination against other groups, manifests itself in our collective and cultural memories and finds expressions in educational school books or children books, fairytales, films, songs, proverbs, media, to name a few. It is crucial to tackle cultural violence, the cultural dimension of security, to sustain long-lasting peace. Social fragmentation, the lack of knowledge about the *other*, the lack of self-confidence and a missing capacity to engage in conflicts constitutes an unhealthy conflict culture. This has to be acknowledged as a real threat to peaceful coexistence.

In this article, we mainly discussed the following and would like to particularly stress:

(1) A first and important step to work against stereotyping and negative pictures of the *other* is to provide information (e.g., the context of the other, the existence of cultural violence, etc.) and to enhance the educational system with this knowledge. This also demands the scrutiny, discussion and modification of teaching books in relation to the existence of cultural violence towards *other* groups. That could be addressed in what we call “peace and security education.” Knowledge means increased security. But knowledge as information is not enough. Other *knowledge* is needed as well.

(2) It is important to develop knowledge about how people interact with each other and about people’s coping strategies in daily life, i.e., their mode of relationship-building. Fear of the *other* often stems from a lack of contact with the *other*. It is important to create spaces where the *other* can be encountered. Thus we think it is important to allow for the experience and the creation of new qualitative relationships across the social divides which demands a (re-) building of trust towards the frightened or strange person from another social group.

To this end, Raphael Vergin’s experience with pbi, illustrates how and why deep connectedness, empathy and a strong set of empowering principles can support *securing citizenship*. Hannah Reich’s set of experiences with interactive theater in Lebanon shows that the feeling of security is shaped by cultural patterns of meaning as much as by the perception of the self.

Further, our experiences depicted the “Art of Seeing” as an important feature towards *securing citizenship*. This “Art of Seeing” can be trained through interactive theater and meditation techniques. It is a non-judgmental view, deriving from a double position of consciousness: observing the situation and the self – its emotions, thoughts and actions – with respect. It makes us attentive to small modes of change and possibilities for action. As both experiences from the field show, it is possible to strengthen the capacities of the individual to overcome a crisis and to navigate more effectively through situations of insecurity. People can be supported “to learn” security and to focus on their capacities. The subjective dimensions of security, including a person’s emotional management, can be trained. Thus beside tackling cultural violence through information and fostering knowledge about relationship-building and building relationships across the social divide,

(3) The self-esteem of a person needs to be strengthened, so that people will not feel immediately threatened through personal or societal crises. Research on group-focused enmity, done in Bielefeld, has proved that negative attitudes towards social minorities are increasing when people feel threatened, e.g., by financial and economic crises (Zick et al. 70). Therefore, information about as well as encounter with the *other* is not enough. Personal development is the core of *securing citizenship*. In that regard, experience-based, participatory learning tools can foster the feeling of being secure. We have to offer space to strengthen people’s capacities to engage in a healthy and conscious relationship with themselves. This includes working on their fears and doubts and carving out a

strong system of values, beliefs and inner motivations to engage. To work on personal development means to work on negative mental reasoning and on creative potential to envision a peaceful existence. This comprises a substantial part of human capacity to feel secure and handle conflicts constructively.

Security is, as made obvious, deeply interwoven with the individual and collective perception of the world. While feelings of security are connected to the perception of the self in relation to the outside world, they strongly connect also to capacities to interact with others. This is why education plays such a central role in the creation of secure environments and *securing citizenship*. A holistic education, which we call “peace and security education,” is necessary for Europe as much as for post-war countries to enable its citizens to create secure environments and act constructively in situations of crises.

Such an “education for peace and security” is not limited to pre- or post-war situations. Rather, it is necessary to bring about *securing citizens* in any society. Each society and its individuals face unique challenges regarding insecure surroundings. These can be perceived threats emerging from financial and economic crises, fear of terrorist attacks or fears related to an increase of displaced persons around the world.

Bringing about *securing citizenship* is therefore not limited to security personnel. It should be accessible to all citizens just as it is best-practice with regard to “civic education”. Individuals who transcend merely reactive patterns to crises and are able to respond constructively and creatively are needed to face the challenges ahead. Again, citizens as *securing citizens* are not a substitute for the state, but create a vivid, vigilant society of social creativity, interaction and well-being.

In a world of economic, social and environmental crises, we see a need to build a more holistic educational system, which results in *securing citizens* as creative, conscious, self-aware, and responsible individuals. This would, in our view, fundamentally contribute to a more resilient society and a more secure world. Today’s education is after all the security of tomorrow.

Notes

1. In recent discussions on networked security (German: “vernetzte Sicherheit”) and civil-military cooperation, the need for bottom-up relationship-building is emphasized (VENRO 1).
2. We use the term “interactive theater”, to refer to a broad set of participatory, interactive theater methods referring mainly to techniques such as Image Theater, Forum Theater, Cop in the head etc. from the arsenal of *Theater for Living* (TfL) from David Diamond, Vancouver and *Theater of the Oppressed* (TdO) shaped by Augusto Boal (+2009), *Jio de Jeinero*, in adapted versions, suitable for conflict transformation (Bteich/Reich 2009; Reich 2013).
3. Eguren and Caraj state that their *New protection manual for human rights defenders*, “is a work in progress, and will need to be developed, improved and refined over time” (11).
4. To retrace the origin of the concept: see Human Development Report 22–46 and Krause 2–4.
5. Editors’ note: translated by the authors.
6. For a brief overview of the story of Jay Kishor Labh see “Nepal: Adding Insult to Injury” 14–17.
7. See also Heitmeyer, who demonstrates that, violence cannot be prevented through a tolerance, which ignored the conflicting issues, but rather through contentious agency (276).
8. Dr. Hannah Reich is currently taking this approach further by tackling the (in-) security in universities, schools and families with interactive theater in a project on non-violent and civic education in Jordan with Berghof Peace Education. She has written her PhD about interactive theater for building relationships across social divides.
9. See for example www.theatreoftheoppressed.org/ or <http://www.formaat.org/> which both list some of the activists using interactive theater techniques based on Boalian and Diamondian techniques. Specifically, working in crises, the work of Hjalmar Eichhorn and Domenik Werner has to be mentioned, as well as James Thompson’s work in Sri Lanka.
10. That’s why Boal named this unfolded space *aesthetic space* to refer to the nonverbal, image based, perceptual *sensual* structure of this space for communication (18).
11. In spite of the importance of confessionalism, one must be wary of the pitfalls of taking the discourses of difference and separation as a full and adequate depiction of the social reality. Notwithstanding the conditions of the war, where informal militia-based security systems demanded a clear territorial separation between the conflicting parties, there was still a degree of diversity of the population of a given area. However, they did their best to remain invisible, not claiming any rights or participation, reinforcing the perception of a homogenous territory in confessional terms, thus fostering the enactment of difference.
12. The same is true for many people in Germany, who see e.g. certain “other” groups, such as foreigner as not as trustworthy as Germans. A very helpful concept to

comprehend this syndrome is the notion and the studies of “group focussed enmity” (Zick et al. 3).

13. For further information, see Bteich/Reich 4.
14. “Cultural violence” means those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence -exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) -that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence“ (Galtung 291).

Works Cited

- Behoud, Suhela. *Die Begleitung von pbi Freiwilligen in der internationalen Friedensarbeit. Vorbereitung, Betreuung und Nachbereitung von Freiwilligeneinsätzen. pbi Studie 2.* Hamburg: peace brigades international – Deutscher Zweig e.V., 2009. Print.
- Boal, Augusto. *Games for Actors and Non-Actors.* London: Routledge, 2000. Print.
- Bteich, Richard and Reich, Hannah. *Enacting Places of Change. Interactive Theatre as an instrument for postwar peacebuilding in Lebanon.* Berlin, 2009. Web. 14 Sept. 2015.
- Diamond, David. *Theatre for Living: The Art and Science of Community-Based Dialogue.* Victoria BC: Trafford Publishing, 2007. Print.
- Eguren, Enrique and Caraj, Marie. *New Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders.* Brussels: Protection International, 2009. Print.
- Eichhorn, Hjalmar. *Tears into Energies Tears into Energy - Das Theater der Unterdrückten in Afghanistan.* Bielefeld: Ibidem Verlag, 2011. Print.
- Galtung, Johan. "Cultural violence." *Journal of Peace Research*, 27.3 (1990): 291- 304. Print.
- Hartnagel, Moritz. Personal Interview. 27 June 2014.
- Heitmeyer, Wilhelm. *Gruppenbezogene Menschenfeindlichkeit - die theoretische Konzeption und erste empirische Ergebnisse.* Ed. Wilhelm Heitmeyer. *Deutsche Zustände. Folge 1.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002. Print.
- Human Development Report. New York: UNDP, 1994. Print.
- Johnson, Michael. *All Honourable Men: The Social Origins of War in Lebanon.* Oxford: IB Tauris, 2001. Print.
- Khalaf, Samir. *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon.* New York: Columbia UP, 2002. Print.
- Krause, Keith. "Towards a Practical Human Security Agenda." *DCAF Policy Papers 26* (2007). Print.
- Lederach, John Paul. *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace.* Oxford: OUP, 2005. Print.
- Miller, Andrew. PBI Nepal Field Update. Nepal Project Steering Committee, 2005. Web. 13 Sept. 2015.
- Mtukwa, Tendai. "Informal Peacebuilding Initiatives in Africa: Removing the Table." *ACCORD, AJCR* 15.1 (2015): 85–106. Print.
- Nepal: Adding Insult to Injury. Continued Impunity for Wartime Abuses.* Nepal: Human Rights Watch and Advocacy Forum, 2011. Web. 14 Sept. 2015.
- Newman, Edward. "Critical Human Security Studies." *Review of International Studies* 36 (2010): 77–94. Print.
- Reich, Hannah. *Frieden stiften durch Theater. Konfessionalismus und sein Transformationspotential: Interaktives Theater im Libanon.* Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2013. Print.
- Shank, Michael and Schirch, Lisa. "Strategic Arts-Based Peacebuilding." *Peace and Change: A Journal of Peace Research* 33.2 (2008): 217–242. Print.
- Thompson, James. "Digging Up Stories: An Archaeology of Theatre in War." *The Drama Review* 48.3 (2004): 150–164. Print.

VENRO. Konturenlos und unbrauchbar - Das Konzept der vernetzten Sicherheit aus Perspektive von Nichtregierungsorganisationen. *Standpunkt Nr 2*. Bonn: Verband Entwicklungspolitik deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen e.V. (VENRO), 2012. Web. 14 Sept. 2015.

Zick, Anderas, Küpper, Beate and Hövermann, Andreas. *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination - A European Report*. Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2011. Print.

