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PELSTE Peace Education Forum

March 20, 2021

### **Participant commentary**

I thank PELSTE for allowing us to learn about peace education in Hiroshima. From this workshop, I learned that peacebuilding is a long-term endeavor that covers across generations. I begin with a summary of the three interviews then proceed to commentary.

Mr. Morishita describes his initial challenges as a peace educator and a survivor of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. Initially, he reasoned that sharing his experience would potentially subject his students to trauma and shock. However, after reading his students' essays about a story he had shared over the radio, he gained the courage to share his experiences. The incident emboldened him further to continue promoting peace education. He took the initiatives to design and distribute questionnaires to establish how students made sense of the atomic bomb or Hibakusha. He found out that the majority of students were familiar with the atomic bomb, but they felt far removed from it. Mr. Morishita uses calligraphy and poetry as strategies for teaching peace education.

Mr. Taga is a second-generation survivor of the atomic bomb and his perspective on peace education emerges from this identity. Early in his career, he interacted with colleagues who had witnessed the atomic bombing or had direct experience. The colleagues often shared their experiences with students. While Mr. Taga acknowledges the need to emphasize Hiroshima in peace education, he also advocates for a curriculum that exposes students to other contexts that were affected by the war, such as Okinawa. For Mr. Taga, peace education should also involve other issues of human rights; different forms of discrimination that occur both locally

and globally. Peace education should enable the cultivation of compassion that allows survivors and other people who face different forms of discrimination (such as Zainichi Koreans and Burakumin people) to have the courage to communicate their feelings without ever worrying if they are understood. He urges peace educators to include cases in which Japan served as a perpetrator, such as the Korean peninsula occupation, as part of their teaching content.

Mr. Nomoto advocates for a curriculum that integrates peace education in regular classrooms rather than a designated program for summer. He suggests that peace education should focus on everyday occurrences in classrooms to ensure peace in learning environments. He reasons that some of the expectations of peace education place enormous responsibility on children, a factor that can undermine the ultimate goal of peace education. He further highlights that different opinions should be encouraged not only in peace education but also in discussions about the atomic bomb itself. The focus should be on the facts about the atomic bomb and on the event itself, as he mentions: “the fact that bombing happened and what happened that day could teach us a lot.” Mr. Nomoto identifies the challenge of relying on teaching manuals, which constrain educators to particular modes of teaching and knowledge. He advocates for multiple resources that offer different perspectives. For him peace education should allow children to form their own opinions based on the knowledge provided.

The three interviews provide a perspective on peace education in Hiroshima from three generations. They have inspired me to reflect on the complexity of narrating the histories of violent events that have shaped and continue to shape our present. I believe that it is paramount to talk about the past. However, in order to avoid the risk of “reducing history into dualistic polarities” that seek to produce binary categories of perpetrators versus victims, peace educators and researchers should strive to see what John Paul Lederach, an American professor of peace

studies, refers to as “ seeing complexity on the other side of simplicity,” which means that the historical event should be viewed as entangled in a complex network of relationships that comprises numerous actors who perform multiple actions at different levels (Lederach, 2005, p 54). Therefore, we cannot afford to reduce the past to a single homogenous narrative. Lederach’s approach allows us to conceive ourselves as part of this historical network of interrelationships that is ever-changing—an aspect that may prompt us to reflect on different players and their responsibilities. For example, the responsibilities of perpetrators, victims, witnesses, educators or politicians may not be similar.

The interviews have enabled me to consider approaches to history that involve questioning what scholars and practitioners consider as knowledge in peace education. One way to think about knowledge involves taking into account the polyphony of voices involved in the various issues covered in the curriculum [As Mr. Taga noted]. This can be achieved by asking questions of agency, positionality, or beneficiaries.

We must learn to problematize ideas and practices often viewed as self-evident in peace education. For instance, the peace education curriculum in Kenya, a country in East Africa, where I started my teaching career, is integrated into school subjects but also taught through life skills education. Some of the ideas proposed in life skills education are considered generic, thus applicable in all contexts. However, this view overlooks the fact that ideas are historical. There is a need for peace educators and researchers to consider how different ideas came into being, circulated, and became localized. The same case applies to subjects of intervention in research peace education. For instance, in Kenya, the emphasis is usually given to peaceful co-existence among ethnic groups—an approach that forms a crucial part of ensuring that such an event will never occur again. However, I think that focusing on the contemporary scene may obscure

historical events that contributed to the present issues. I contend that peace education in Kenya should engage colonial governance practices that focused on classifying people in terms of race, gender, and ethnic groups.

To conclude, the Hiroshima peace education program incorporates most of the ideas discussed above, as exemplified by the approach to peace education employed at the Hiroshima Global Academy. The interviews also show how educators continuously wrestle with the ever-evolving field by constantly questioning the idea of peace education and knowledge taught.

Thank you.