

# The Deep Structural Relationship between Culture of Peace and Culture of Science

David Adams  
Senior Programme Specialist  
UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme

The concept of a culture of peace was formulated for UNESCO by the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men (Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, 1989). In its final Declaration the Congress recommended UNESCO to "help construct a new vision of peace by developing a peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between men and women". The Yamoussoukro Declaration recognized the Seville Statement on Violence (1986) as an important foundation for its work. This statement, written by scientists following consideration of the available data, rejected claims that war is inevitable because it based on biological factors (genes, brain mechanisms, "instinct for war", or "human nature") and concluded that "the same species that invented war is capable of inventing peace.". Hence, from its founding, the UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme was closely related to the work of scientists.

UNESCO has engaged in activities to promote a culture of peace from its beginnings, when it was founded in the aftermath of the Second World War to construct the defences of peace in the minds of men and women. However, with the end of the Cold War and the new political and social world order which followed, it was evident that a new effort was needed that would give UNESCO as well as the international community the instruments to transform the still dominant culture of war into a culture of peace. Hence, in October 1992, the UNESCO Executive Board proposed a UNESCO programme which would undertake activities of reconciliation and co-operation in countries where United Nations peace-keeping operations had been implemented or could be anticipated.

The first three National Programmes of Culture of Peace were initiated in El Salvador, Mozambique and Burundi. These programmes are based on a process of participation, dialogue and cooperation of all parties to the conflicts in the countries concerned. In addition, support has been provided to the National Culture of Peace Programme that is being undertaken by the Philippines. Colloquiums have been held to develop the process of cooperation and participation of all parties to the conflicts in Congo, Sudan, and Somalia, laying the base for culture of peace activities in those countries. Also, a national culture of peace programme is presently under development in Nicaragua and requests for culture of peace initiatives have been received from a number of other countries.

In 1995, the UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme was expanded by the Organization into a Transdisciplinary Project which involves all of the sectors, including those for education, culture, communication and social science, in a global approach to promoting a culture of peace. This requires transforming all of the values, attitudes and behaviours which have been developed in the culture of war. Its aims are to 1) change the concept and practice of power from violence and force to non-violence and respect for human rights; 2) reform authoritarian structures and exploitation to democratic participation and sustainable human development for all; 3) replace male domination with full equality of women and men; 4) counter secrecy and the manipulation of information with participatory communication and the free flow and sharing of information and knowledge; 5) convert enemy images and distrust of others to understanding, tolerance and solidarity among all peoples and cultures.

One recognizes in this list of aims a great deal of parallel between a culture of peace and a culture of science.

1. The emphasis on non-violence is related to the fundamental characteristic of science, which is that a scientific law cannot be imposed by force, but only by convincing others of its truth. Whenever in history there have been attempts to force scientific conclusions upon an unconvinced community, the results have been disastrous, both for the scientific establishment and for the culture as a whole. In fact, it could be argued that practitioners of non-violence can learn from scientists how to present a convincing case in trying to convert their opponents to change their minds. It is necessary to carefully explain the methodology employed to arrive at the conclusions, and to convince the other that it is to their benefit to share this truth.

2. The emphasis upon development for all in the culture of peace may be related to the question of the uses of science. If science is used for destructive purposes or for the exploitation of some by others, it is not within the proper ethical framework to which it should be dedicated. Just as medicine has its Hippocratic Oath, by which the physician commits himself or herself to the use of medicine for the benefit and not the harm of

others, would it not be appropriate that the scientist take and follow a similar commitment?

3. The equality of women and men is now generally assumed in scientific work, so much so that it need hardly be questioned. However, in many societies there is not yet as much access of girl children to education, including scientific education, as for boy children, a situation which robs science of its full human potential.

4. The free flow of information is a fundamental characteristic of both a culture of peace and the culture of science. This is so evident as to be a truism. If there is any essential aspect of the scientific method, it is the full communication among scientists of methods and results, putting them into an historical context in which it is acknowledged that the work builds on the shoulders of those who have gone before and contributes to the work of those who will come after. Whenever there is secrecy or manipulation of information, it produces a distortion of the scientific system, which at best negates the value of the work done and at worst produces false starts and setbacks for the entire scientific community.

5. Science is a universal search in which there is no "them" and "us", no "friend" and "enemy", but a single, international process in which all humanity may take part regardless of race, sex, religion, national identity, or any other divisive label. Scientific truth is as true if it is demonstrated in one country as it is in another. It is a universal, and as such, it encourages the universal understanding, tolerance and solidarity which is characteristic of a culture of peace.

Given the deep structural relationship between a culture of peace and the culture of science, there is good reason to expect scientists to contribute in their capacity as scientists to the peace process, and that they should be mobilized to this end.