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Diversity Education in Euro-America

Social Exclusion and Violence in Guatemala and El Salvador: Education for a Culture of Peace

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Abstract

During the Spanish colonial period Central America was a region where people from different continents and cultures converged and were mixed. This paper seeks to show, based on historical and sociological analysis, the multicultural and multiethnic origin of two of the current Central American Republics –Guatemala and El Salvador- and the problems deriving from the building up of a new state that, at the time of independence from Spain, didn't include the different cultures and ethnic groups that were present in the region. Exclusion of these human groups in the new social and political structure is a factor that helps to explain the phenomena of social inequality and violence that have characterized the region since the second half of last century to the present, and that today, require a new proposal for social integration to which education is called to contribute. The analysis highlights the need to build a new relationship between the various groups based on the concept of education for a culture of peace.

Keywords: Central America, Integration, Peace Education

Historical and Social Context of Guatemala and El Salvador[1]

An Encounter of Cultures and Ethnicities - The Conquest and The Colonial Period

Central America is a region where, from the early sixteenth century, a number of human groups from different continents (America, Europe and Africa) converged, leading to new groups and new ethnic cultures in the region today.

El Salvador and Guatemala in particular were part of the area where Mayan culture dominated as one of the three great American civilizations that reached its peak between the sixth to the ninth century BC. When the Spanish arrived, in the early sixteenth century, many ethnic groups inhabited the territory (Quiche, Cakchiquel, Zutuhil, Nahua-Pipil Pokoman, Mam and others), many of which were submitted with great difficulty by the conquistadors from Mexico. The conquest of the region was carried out between

[1] Brett, Roddy, "Confronting Racism from within the Guatemalan State: The Challenges Faced by the Defender of Indigenous Rights of Guatemala's Human Rights Ombusdman's Office", *Oxford Development Studies*, Vol. 39 (2011), No. 2, pp. 205 – 228.

1519 and 1540. With the Spaniards came other indigenous groups from Mexico who supported them in their program of conquest of these territories. This was possible not only because of the superiority of weapons and number of soldiers who accompanied the Spanish but also because of the differences and conflicts between the local groups themselves and the deep impact that the foreigners' diseases had in the local population. Some scholars say that almost 50% of the local population of El Salvador in the early sixteenth century died due to smallpox, an unknown disease in the new world.

From sixteenth to early nineteenth century, the modern countries of Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica) formed the Captaincy General of Guatemala. While legally this was part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain (Mexico), in practice it was administered independently by the figure of a Captain General, located in the city of Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala.

Spanish domination was consolidated in the years 1540-1760. This consisted not only of an increased presence on the territory, with the corresponding creation of new cities, but also for the submission of all ethnic groups. Since the so-called New Laws had banned slavery from the new territories in 1542, the Spanish Crown established the Mandate system (*Encomienda* in Spanish) to control the native population and to promote the economic exploitation of new territories. This consisted of assigning a number of adults to the *encomendero*, to whom Indians had to pay a tax on products or labour. The *Encomienda* expired just two generations after the death of the *encomendero*, and then the Indians had to pay taxes directly to the Spanish crown.

The Patria as a Political and Cultural Construction - Independence and Postcolonial Period

The administrative political configuration of the region varied in the following centuries, when various provinces with autonomous administration were created, these were the basis and origin of the current Central American countries. These were declared independence from Spain in 1821, after which other regions and provinces of the Spanish America did the same. Independence did not mean an alteration of the colonial social and economic structures, but only a change in the group holding on to power. Not anymore the *peninsulares*, but the Creoles would then wield political, economic and social power to set the new emerging states according to the interests and vision of their own cultural world. The construction of the new states, at the time of independence from Spain, therefore, did not include the different cultures and ethnic groups that were present in the region. As Severo Martínez Peláez said, the new country that emerged was basically the Homeland of Creole (*Patria del criollo*), in which there was little space for the other groups present in the territory.[2]

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[2] Severo Martinez Pelaez, In Memoriam: La Patria Del Criolo, Enzayo, un cuarto de siglo después. Guatemala. Archivado desde el original el 26 de noviembre de 2015. Consultado el 20 de agosto de 2010

The construction of new republics was reflected into the literature and art, which were instruments of exaltation of the American land and the construction of a new imagined homeland. A clear example is the *Rusticatio Mexicana*, a poem of the Jesuit Rafael Landivar , born in Guatemala[3], which played in Central America an equivalent role to that the *Comentarios Reales* of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, born in Peru, played in the foundation and legitimacy of the Andean Creole emancipation.[4] When the topic about indigenous people was introduced into the homeland concept, it was only as a symbolic element of the past and not as an essential component of the new social construction. From this perspective we can understand the praise that was given to the ancient American empires and of some historical-mythical characters, as Atlacatl in El Salvador and Tecum Uman in Guatemala who were showed as opposed to the foreign conqueror.

The inclusion of other ethnic and cultural groups in the new states even marginalized them more since they were considered even strangers in their territory. Such was the case of Xinca and Garifuna culture as well as the blacks brought from Africa. In fact the word *Mestizaje* (mixed race) was ordinarily referred to a person of mixed European and Native American ancestry, ignoring the mixture with other African and ethnic groups.

Political System, Economy and Social Life in the Republican Period - The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

The Liberal Reforms and the Political Consolidation of the State

The transformation of the former provinces of Central America into independent republics took place during the nineteenth century. However, a real consolidation of the state would occur only after 1970 with the introduction of the liberal ideas in El Salvador and Guatemala that would lead to some major reforms. These were characterized by a concentration of state power, the reduction of the local power and the restriction of autonomy enjoyed by the indigenous communities, municipalities and other social institutions like the church.

Politics during this period was a game played by two main forces: conservative and liberals, both representing different interest and vision of two groups among the Creoles themselves. The economy of both countries during this period focused on large monocultures, as it was during the colonial period, when under a monopoly system were marketed products such as cocoa, balsam and indigo.

The liberal reforms favoured an economy based on coffee cultivation and produced a profound transformation of land tenure and ownership. The rise of this product led

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[3] Mendez de Penedo (ed.), *Rusticatio Mexicana*, Universidad Rafael Landivar, 2007, p.92.

[4] Jesús Díaz-Caballero, Nación y patria: las lecturas de los "Comentarios reales" y el patriotismo criollo emancipador, 2004, p. 81.

to the expropriation of the communal land belonging to indigenous communities. The peasants and Indians became servants in the same land that had been taken from them.[5] Liberal reforms had a profound cultural impact, by altering the way of life and the precarious balance in which indigenous communities and farmers had lived for years, a space in which they had enjoyed certain autonomy and had some participation in economic and political life.[6]

Internal Conflicts and Transition to Democracy in the Twentieth Century

At the beginning of the twentieth century there were some events that negatively altered the living conditions and the population favoured the exclusion of many groups. This led to an increase in the internal conflicts of the region.

In El Salvador, the social and economic condition of the mestizo farmers and the Indian communities were exacerbated by the effects of the global crisis. The falling price of coffee in the thirties caused an unprecedented social crisis in the country which led to the Indians' revolt (Nahuat communities) in western El Salvador. The crisis led to a coup d'état by General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez and the establishment, thereafter, of a series of military dictatorships that were prolonged until the seventies.[7]

The 1932 revolt was resolved by the government with a slaughter of Nahuat Indians. Although it has not been possible to quantify the dead, an estimation of 10,000 to 40,000 people has been done. The interpretation of indigenous popular revolt as part of a communist movement in the country, led to the persecution (ethnocide) of the members of indigenous communities, who had to give up their cultural practices, language and dress as a survival strategy.

Authoritarian and dictatorial regimes characterized both countries since the early twentieth century, interrupted only by a few brief periods of openness and quest for change (1931 in El Salvador and from 1944 to 1954 in Guatemala). However, the counter-reform movement and the closure of opportunities for transformation encouraged many groups to neglect the civil and democratic spaces of struggle and favoured the emergence of armed movements. This happened in Guatemala at the beginning of the sixties, as a result of a failed *coup d'état* promoted by some members of the army, and in El Salvador in the late sixties.

Both countries were involved in long civil wars, El Salvador from 1980 to 1992 and Guatemala from 1964 to 1996, which only ended in the early nineties as a result of international pressure for democratic openness and the fall of the socialist bloc in Europe.

[5] Grandin Greg, *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation*, Duke University Press, Durham 2000.

[6] López, *Blood of Guatemala*, 2008, p.1773.

[7] Delugan Robin Maria, "Commemorating from the Margins of the Nation: El Salvador 1932, Indigeneity and Transnational Belonging", *Anthropological Quarterly* 86, 4 (2013), pp. 965 - 994. Lopez Bernal, Carlos Gregorio, "Las Reformas Liberales en El Salvador y Sus Implicaciones en El Poder Municipal, 1871-1890", *Diálogos Revista Electrónica de Historia* 1409 - 469X (2008), pp. 1770 – 1800.

Civil wars ended in El Salvador and Guatemala with a peace agreement between the government and guerrilla military groups.

Social Exclusion in Central America

The historical and social analysis provides the context that explains the social exclusion prevailing nowadays in Central America. These are not the effect of a unique historical event, but the result of a number of factors and agents that have interacted over time and explain the type of relations prevailing between the various groups.

As has been noted, the colonial structure and the various political and economic regimes that prevailed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, during the independent and republican period, generated a series of exclusion patterns and structures in Central American societies. These structures, along with events in the recent history of each country, allow us to identify four categories from which we cannot only interpret the consequences of exclusion, but above all advance the process of remedying it through education goal of our seminar. Through these, we cannot only interpret the consequences of exclusion, but especially propose some solutions through education, goal of our seminar.

Patterns or Exclusion Categories

Poverty - the Exclusion of Production and Income Distribution

The independence of Guatemala and El Salvador was a break with the political power of Spain and monopoly laws limiting trade in the colonies. However, this did not imply a radical change in the economic model; rather the monoculture system was reinforced according to the preponderance of the products in the international market. Thus, while cocoa, balsam and indigo prevailed in the colonial period, during the Republican period the boom took other crops such as coffee, sugar and cotton.

Although the agro-export economy based on coffee growing favoured greater economic growth in both countries, it did not improve the living conditions of the majority of its inhabitants. The peasant and indigenous populations, already living a subsistence economy, suffered the problem of expropriation of communal ejidos due to the need to increase land devoted to monoculture by large landowners and producers.

An attempt to change the economic model of both countries only occurred with the industrial boom that was promoted during the fifties and sixties with the creation of the Central American Common Market (MERCOMUN) and the development of an industrial model of import substitution, promoted by CEPAL, which promote the development of local industries and the encouragement of exports (1950-1978). The breaking-up of the MERCOMUN, the unequal distribution of the benefits of growth obtained with this model and the concentration of land ownership, explains the strong

social crisis that would arise from the seventies and would favour the emergence of the internal armed conflict in El Salvador which reached Guatemala in the sixties.

The conflict in El Salvador resulted in a death of over 70,000 people, a strong migration to the United States of America, the outflow of capital from the country and the destruction of much of the national economic infrastructure. In Guatemala the civil war left almost two hundred thousand dead, forty-five thousand missing and about a hundred thousand displaced.

The end of the civil wars in the early nineties marked an initial improvement of the economy of both countries and the liberalization of the economy and privatization of major service sectors. The growth, however, did not last long, a new deadlock occurred already in the early nineties due to the global economic crisis.

Mestizaje, Ethnic and Cultural Stratification

As stated above, Central America was a region where a number of human groups from different continents converged: American Indians, Africans brought as slaves and Spanish. This mixture involved not only coexistence amongst them, but also a mixture of races and cultures that gave rise to new ethnic and cultural identities.

At the time of arrival of the Spaniards, the numerous ethnic Indians in Central America (Maya, Xincas, Nahuat, Cacaoperas, etc.) were not only the ones present. There were other indigenous groups from Mexico, as I have mentioned, who came together with the conquerors (Tlaxcalans and Mexica Cholulans). Meanwhile Africans arrived in several waves of migration brought as slaves by Europeans (Spanish, Portuguese or English) on the occasion of the conquest and development of cocoa, balsam, indigo, which required intensive labour. [8]The Garifuna, descendants of mixed Caribbean Indians of St. Vincent and African ex-slaves came to the region expelled by the British from the island of San Vicente. They settled mainly in the Atlantic coast of Central America. The Europeans were present in the region mainly through the Spanish dominance, but other groups arrived in the following centuries, like the British in Belize interested in the precious wood and the Italians and Germans who exploited and exported some crops and coffee.

The relationships between these groups, since the beginning of the colony, resulted in a system of strongly stratified and segmented encoding relations between ethnic groups. So there was a concept that the position a person occupies in the social scale must agree with his/her supposed mixture of blood, or more visibly with the colour of his/her skin, producing a kind of pigmentocracy.[9] The more Spanish blood one had, the

[8] Duran, Víctor Manuel, "Los Mayas, Criollos, Garífunas y Mestizos de Belice: Una Muestra Literaria", *Cuadernos de Literatura* 30 (2011), pp. 108 - 137.

[9] Méndez de Penedo, 2007, p. 93.

better position one occupied in society. The Spanish occupied the positions of power and privilege within the colonial government structure, followed by the Creoles, i.e., the children of Spaniards born in America.

A number of categories based on the mixing of blood between Africans, Europeans and Native Americans occurred. As a result of this interrelationship criterion which was applied in each country, a negative assessment of the characteristics of some cultures or ethnic groups arose. Thus, the term "Indian" came to mean ignorant, unintelligent and even lazy. In the case of El Salvador, the term was assimilated to that of communist, after the insurrection and the 1932 genocide.

The ethnocide of 1932 caused the social exclusion of indigenous communities. The invisibility of indigenous communities was produced not only by persecution and fear but also by deliberate state policy of mestizaje promoted in order to create a culturally homogeneous national identity.[10]

From these events the Indian question has been absent from the national debate and the various development proposals that have occurred in the country. Until today the exact size of the indigenous population is not known, it is estimated that it can be between 1-10%. All this has not fostered, until today, a real recognition of national minorities within the Salvadoran state.

A re-evaluation of the Nahuat culture has occurred only after the peace agreements that have allowed the revision of history. The commemoration of the centenary of the arrival of the Spanish in America at the beginning of the nineties also played an important role in the awakening and organization of indigenous communities.

In the case of Guatemala, where the indigenous population is now about 45% of the population, there has not been only a denial of their community and cultural rights, but there has been also a culture of racism that has devalued indigenous people and their culture. However, as several scholars have pointed out, history also provides examples of communities that have been able to articulate their particular vision within the building up of the national state. This is the case of the Quiches of western Guatemala, who managed to develop their own forms of power, creating a regional economic system based on land ownership, agricultural and handicraft production inserted within the domestic market. The Quiches were able to obtain property rights since the early twentieth century that reinforced their cultural and political authority.[11]

It was possible to recognize and define Guatemala as a multicultural, multiethnic and plural state only after the 1996 peace agreements. The peace agreements' documents,

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[10] Robin Maria DeLugan, "Commemorating the Margins of the Nation: El Salvador 1932, Indigeneity and Transnational Belonging" in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 86, (2013) No. 4, 2013, p. 971.

[11] Greg Grandin, *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation*, Duke University Press, 2000.

however, are far from being real in practice due to a lack of an effective implementation of policies of its contents and the persistence of strong discriminatory attitudes that require deeper changes in the local culture.

The Urban–Rural Divide

In the last two decades, Latin America has become the second most urbanised area in the world, with more than 80 percent of the population living in cities. Only North America has a higher percentage (83 percent). [12]Even in small countries, like El Salvador and Guatemala, almost half of the populations live in urban areas: 66 percent in El Salvador and 51 percent in Guatemala.

The divide between urban and rural areas is critical as it lays a difference in access to basic resources that are necessary for individual development (education, health, housing, a decent job, etc.), but also because it marks the access to a number of new fundamental resources for those groups which were excluded from development until now: information, communication, public voice, right to choose, etc. The large differences between the two contexts could not only reproduce but increase inequality in the quality of life of the people living in them.

An additional problem has occurred with the rapid growth of cities: the new inequalities that are created within them, with the corresponding rise of new challenges.[13] Most of the problems derived from the urban setting (crime, violence, environmental concern, etc.) have been addressed through new forms of exclusion and division of the urban space. Spatial isolation has been the new criteria adopted by urban dwellers that have created new forms of exclusion and new typology of urban spaces: the segregated spaces of the rich and the peripheral areas of the poor. If distance had once separated urban from rural, today physical barriers separate the various groups in the same space.

Gender Discrimination

While in all countries of the world forms of gender discrimination are recognized in many areas of social life, particularly those related to labour, skills recognition and remuneration, this pattern becomes much more problematic when associated with the other three factors previously considered.

The situation of women has been marked by the macho culture that has prevailed in many countries in Latin America for many centuries. This culture has caused not only an inadequate assessment of the contribution of women to family life, and economic and social development but also has led to a culture of violence against women that has

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[12] Pnud, *Informe Sobre Desarrollo Humano 2013, El Ascenso Del Sur: Progreso Humano en un Mundo Diverso*, New York 2013a.

[13] Macedo Joseli, "The Urban Divide in Latin America: Challenges and Strategies for Social Inclusion", *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (2012), pp. 139 - 141.

evolved in many countries. Thus, violence against women not only physically, occurs across all cultures and ethnic groups, affecting indigenous and non-indigenous women alike, although with particular nuances in each case and in different dimensions. As Menjivar argues, gender violence is often associated with other forms of social violence and manifests itself in different ways and times of everyday life and not just at particular times or in specific ways.[14]

In Guatemala gender discrimination becomes more important because it is a factor that adds up to that of poverty and ethnicity. In this regard, indigenous women become the object of a triple discrimination: for being poor, for being indigenous and for being women.

It is generally considered that income inequality is associated with human capital, which has made education of disadvantaged groups a priority for all governments. However, as indicated by a study on relation between ethnicity, gender and income, there is a remarkable influence of ethnicity and gender on income discrimination. While a third of the differences in the wages of indigenous and non-indigenous men would be explained by ethnic discrimination, a third of the differences in the wages of minority women is explained by both ethnic and gender discrimination. But gender discrimination seems to explain a larger percentage of the income gap compared to ethnic discrimination.[15]

Results of the Exclusion Patterns

As a result of the interaction of these four patterns of exclusion a series of problems have increased and new challenges have been generated. Education is called to contribute to the solution of both.

Persistence of Inequality in Human Development

As recognized by the El Salvador's Human Development Report 2013, the balance of economic and social history of the country shows a deficit: insufficient progress in human development, limited capacity to create decent work, low productivity and declining of real minimum wages, high levels of poverty and inequality in income distribution, slow and unstable economic growth, fragile public finances.[16]

At the root of all these problems, which may also refer to the situation in Guatemala, is not only the historical and structural situation described above, which partly explains the inequality, but also the actual state of difficulties to generate the appropriate con-

[14] Menjivar, Cecilia, "Violence and Women's Lives in Eastern Guatemala. A Conceptual Framework", *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2008), pp. 109 – 136.

[15] Vasquez, William, "Ethnic and Gender Wage Discrimination in Guatemala", *The Journal of Developing Areas*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2010), pp. 109-126.

[16] Pnud, *El Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano El Salvador 2013. Imaginar un Nuevo País. Hacerlo Posible*, San Salvador 2013b.

ditions for human development of its people and create future opportunities for all, especially for the younger generation.

When various components of human development index (education, health, employment, housing, participation, etc.) are analysed in relation with the categories of exclusion outlined above (poverty, ethnicity, gender, urban or rural location) emerge clearly how minority groups (poor, indigenous, rural dwellers and women) are in disadvantageous situations in each one of these indicators. For example, the Human Development Index of Guatemala in 2010 was 0.580. But while in urban areas it was 0.658, in the rural area it was only 0.484, when among non-Indians was 0.629, among Indians was only 0.483. These differences are even more present when considering the distribution of GDP. In the same year the participation of the highest quintile (Q5) in the per capita household income was 60.6 while that of the lowest quintile (Q1) was only 2.9.[17]

The inadequate results to promote a more equitable level of development among its inhabitants through government policies and programs in El Salvador and Guatemala indicate the need for further strategies to ensure the effective implementation of policies and use of resources limited to the state.

Social Violence

Violence in the region has not started with the internal conflicts that arose in the sixties and seventies. This has its earliest roots in history and in the living conditions of the citizens of both countries.

The armed conflicts concluded during the nineties with Peace Agreements and the beginning of democratization in Guatemala and El Salvador. However, the lack of economic opportunities and the social differences that led to the start of the conflict were not resolved by the end of the war. The expectations generated by the return to democracy did not turn into better living conditions and security for the population.

Social violence has had different manifestations in the region. Although the most noticeable is the high number of homicides and acts of public aggression, there are other forms of violence that have placed this as one of the main problems in the region. One of them is the phenomenon of youth gangs, locally known as "maras", which made their appearance locally in the nineties and gained momentum with the deportation of many Central Americans who had lived illegally in the suburbs of Los Angeles and other U.S. cities with this type of problem. The phenomenon has not only found fertile ground to take root in countries characterized by violence and discrimination, but it also evolved until they increased in numbers and organization, becoming real criminal structures (Cruz, 2005, 1158). It is estimated that the gang members are about forty-eight

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[17] Pnud, Guatemala: *Un país de Oportunidades para la Juventud*, Guatemala 2012.

thousand in El Salvador, while in Guatemala it is estimated that there are more than one hundred seventy thousand.[18]

The phenomenon of gangs and other forms of violence present today, are rooted in historical events in both countries and in the culture of authoritarianism and fear that have characterized them. The social relations that prevented and controlled outbreaks of social violence were broken. The war destroyed the trust and cooperation possibilities between people, generating the anonymity atmosphere need for unpunished action, especially when considering the state's inability to be present and to punish offenders.[19]

Internal and External Migration

One of the most important effects of non-inclusive conditions that have prevailed in the Central American region is migration. This has manifested in various features and modes according to the events that have characterized the recent history of countries of the region.

The armed conflict in Guatemala and El Salvador caused a strong internal migration from the countryside to the city during the seventies and eighties, leading to an uncontrolled growth of cities. This migratory flow has continued today, as cities continue to attract people, especially young people, as they offer better services and greater opportunities to overcome economic conditions prevailing in rural areas.

During the period of armed conflict migration also reached significant levels, first with political refugees, belonging to the middle class, then with people from all social strata. The main migration destination has always been the United States, although there have been a significant migration to other countries such as Mexico, Spain and Italy, and even to other areas in Central America, like Belize and Costa Rica. In most cases, such migration was conducted illegally, which has hindered the inclusion of people in their new contexts.

There are no clear data on the number of people who have migrated. The reason lies in the illegal nature of this movement of people, both in the country of origin and destination. In the case of El Salvador, it is estimated that people who had migrated until 2005, both in and out of Central America, could be between 817,000 and 2,680,000.[20] Probably a million Salvadorians live in America alone (about 17% of the population

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[18] Richani Nazih, "State Capacity in Post conflict Settings: Explaining Criminal Violence in El Salvador and Guatemala", in *Civil Wars*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2010), pp. 431-455.

[19] Martel Trigueros, R., "Las Maras Salvadoreñas: Nuevas Formas de Espanto y Control Social", *Estudios Centroamericanos* ECA 696 (2006), pp. 957 - 979.

[20] Pnud, *Informe Sobre Desarrollo Humano El Salvador 2005: Una Mirada Al Nuevo Nosotros: El Impacto de Las Migraciones*, San Salvador, 2005.

of El Salvador). In the case of Guatemala, according to 2010 statistics, over a million and a half Guatemalans have migrated abroad, most of them to the United States.[21]

Salvadorians and Guatemalans, who have migrated to the North, have become over time an important source of income for families and communities in distress, especially during the period of armed conflict. Employment opportunities and salary income in the host countries had been factors that have increased the flow of migrants to the north, especially after the end of armed conflict. The remittances that Salvadorians and Guatemalans living abroad send to relatives in the home countries has grown steadily in the last decade, even during the current crisis that has affected the U.S. economy.

Migration, however, poses major and new challenges to social cohesion in both countries. The El Salvador Human Development Report 2005 noted the contradictory relationship that existed between international migration and human development in the country. While recognizing the contribution of emigration to the sustainability and growth of national economy and the overcoming of extreme poverty in which many families lived, noted the impact on other important dimensions such as social, political and cultural. Migration abroad has caused separation of parents and children, rapid disintegration of the family unit, breakdown of communities, loss of human capital and community leaders. A World Bank report noted that 39.5% of the total migrants had a post secondary education accounted.

The migration of one or both parents has a direct impact on the lives of many young people, causing a weakening of the channels and formation structures, the intergenerational transfers of values, as well as family and social mechanisms of control and regulation. This puts many young people in a situation of risk to the phenomena of violence and gangs that I have outlined above.

New phenomena related to international migration, recently emerged as the growing level of consumption is not linked to the basic and priority needs of the population, increased dropouts especially in the primary and secondary levels, the shortage of sufficient workers to harvest crops, migration from other Central American countries to El Salvador (Honduras and Nicaragua). These raise new challenges that must be analysed and solved.

The Contribution of Education to Social Inclusion

It is clear that the State has the primary responsibility to ensure overcoming barriers and problems of inequality and exclusion, particularly through the establishment of appropriate legal frameworks and the implementation of policies to promote the integral development of all its inhabitants. The diversity and magnitude of the tasks faced

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[21] Pnud, *Guatemala: Hacia Un Estado Para El Desarrollo Humano. Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2009-2010*, Guatemala, 2010.

by Guatemala and El Salvador as a result of the accumulation of unsatisfied demands and the emergence of new challenges, however exceeds the actual capacity of the state in both countries and jeopardize the achievement of even minimum aims as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Although the state is the primary guarantor of all the dimensions of human development, the potential that education has to promote the inclusion of all people and overcoming social inequalities require the collaboration of all sectors of society. Many new projects require integration on the territory of capabilities and resources of the state, the international cooperation agencies, the private sector, as well the same communities that benefit from them. The strategy of public-private partnership that is being promoted by international cooperation in the region is leading to the development of new form of policies and programs that can help not only to solve the problems already mentioned, but bring a new dynamic of building the society with a more inclusive and democratic perspective.

Under this approach, education can provide multiple contributions to the solution of the challenges stated. However, their contribution becomes more urgent in three specific and interrelated areas that respond to current and future challenges.

Education for Inclusive Development

Efforts to raise the HDI in El Salvador and Guatemala have not been sufficient to achieve the desired levels or to overcome the internal differences between population groups.

As shown by various experiences, it's not enough for the State to create structures and develop policies to address the problems, unless these are accompanied by a change in the vision and attitude of people, these may be destined to failure. For example, the recognition of multicultural, multiethnic and multi-religious character of Guatemala and the creation of structures such as the Defender of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - DRIP, a subsidiary unit of the Human Rights Ombudsman, have not been sufficient to overcome the issue of ethnic discrimination in the country. The capacity for effective action in such a unit has been reduced by a number of factors, including limited availability of funds, lack of staff training, but especially the prevailing discriminatory culture in society, even within the same structures of the state.[22] All this demonstrates the need to promote structural change at a deeper level, that of culture, to which only education can provide answers.

As recognized by the *El Salvador Human Development Report 2013*, there are cultural traits that promote inequality and hinder the fulfillment of the agreements. Such traits associated with racism, sexism and authoritarianism explain the difficulties in building

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[22] Rody Brett, "Confronting Racism from within the Guatemalan State: The Challenges Faced by the Indigenous Rights Defender of Guatemala's Human Rights Ombudsman," in *Oxford Development Studies*, Vol 39 (2011), 2, p.206.

a shared identity, reach agreements on issues of common interest, and consolidate the development of democratic institutions based on the development of people.[23]

Education thus becomes the cornerstone upon which to base a change in mentality and attitudes that limit government and private efforts to promote human development in both countries. This entails a greater effort to ensure universal coverage of all children and young at school age, the quality of education offered, but mostly to ensure the significance of such formation for the context and the development of communities.

We can find some examples of programs or initiatives that address these features. Some of them emphasize not only the inclusion of minority groups to education but also the relevance to the cultural and social context of their members. Such is the case of EDUMAYA Program, sponsored by the University Rafael Landivar in Guatemala, under the direction of the Jesuits. [24]The program, intended for Mayan communities, emphasizes a range of educational services in three interrelated dimensions: university education, providing access to the University of indigenous people through scholarship, training and accreditation of bilingual teachers for rural primary education, and design and implementation of innovative models of socio communitarian education. Many similar examples of cooperation between higher education institutions and indigenous organizations or communities can be found in many Latin American countries.

An example of care and development program aimed at women is the Talita Kumi Program in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, founded by a Salesian priest from India, Fr. Jorge Puthempura, which is run by a Kekchi religious community, the Daughters of Resurrrección. The program is geared to the attention of youth women in the Kekchi communities dispersed throughout the region, promoting their formal education and training as promoters of community development through a period of residence at the Centre located in San Pedro Carchá, Alta Verapaz.

Education for Social Cohesion and the Building of a New Citizenship

It is clear that social problems such as violence and immigration have eroded social relations at family and community level. These have not only damaged the social fabric but have also weakened the fundamentals that made its reproduction possible and the institutions that ensured its continuity: the school and the family. Education is called to contribute to the reconstruction of family and community ties, but also to promote a review and redefinition of what it means to be a nation under an inclusive and democratic principle, promoting the effective recognition of groups and communities that have been so far excluded.

[23] Pnud, op.cit., 2013b, p. 10.

[24] Mato, Daniel, "Forms of Intercultural Collaboration between Institutions of Higher Education and Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples in Latin America", *Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2011), pp. 331 - 346.

Under this perspective, education is called to contribute specifically to three important aspects:

The Integration and Social Insertion through Work

In the sphere of human development, the State must ensure necessary conditions for the life of people, but also be able to integrate them in society especially through work. This requires a greater effort to promote new sources of decent work and to provide occupational and vocational training to people, especially young people.

A good example of training and employment generation project, especially among the most disadvantaged, is the Don Bosco Industrial Polygon of El Salvador. A work which was started in a poor area of the capital, further developed rubbish dump site of the city and a territory with high concentration of gangs. The project has not only promoted the creation of jobs through the establishment of a federation of cooperatives run by locals (industrial park), but also generated structures and formative processes (Obrero Empresarial Technical Institute) which is integrated to this production model. These prepare youth through a model of training in work under the idea that young people can and should generate work.

The Construction of National Identity

As I have indicated, the priority here is to promote reflection and redefinition of the meaning of the nation with an inclusive and democratic principle, promoting effective recognition of groups and communities excluded until now.

The main contributions of education in this area relate to the recovery of historical memory and its transmission to new generations, which are at risk of ignoring the social, economic, political and cultural history of these countries and the role that diverse ethnic and cultural groups have played in it. Intensified efforts are needed to ensure correct interpretation of many of the major milestones in the recent history of both countries, especially the events of the recent past of social conflict.

In this respect there are important initiatives carried out by the Church and other institutions of civil society in El Salvador and Guatemala. In Guatemala this initiative was called Interdiocesan Recovery of Historical Memory Project and was led by the Human Rights Office of the Archbishop of Guatemala. The program consisted of the recovery of testimonies of thousands of people about the human rights violations committed during the internal armed conflict. The work was not only looking at retrieving and transmitting historical truth, but also at making visible and giving voice to the victims of armed conflict. The project's centrepiece was the report *Guatemala: Never Again*, released in 4 volumes, which analyzed the impact of violence, its mechanisms, the historical setting and the situation of victims.

Higher education institutions are also contributing to the recovery and Enhancement of the recent and past history of these countries, all of indigenous communities. The Mesoamerican University of Guatemala carries out a research project on various aspects of the ancient Mayan culture, supported by the work of the best national and foreign researchers on the subject, regularly performing a series of publications of high value. In case of El Salvador the Don Bosco University conducts the revitalization program of the Nahuat language, which included the phonological and morphological analysis, lexical collection and reprocessing of Nahuat grammar, a bilingual teaching program in 11 schools in the region where these indigenous communities live (2700 students), the development of teaching materials and a process evaluation and improvement of teaching strategies.

Formation for a New Sense of Citizenship

Today we recognize the need to form the sense of social responsibility through the recognition of rights and duties of each person, the reconstruction of the meaning of the law and the common good. To perform this task is not enough to ensure the minimum conditions for the development of people. The much desired social harmony is not based only on satisfying the basic needs of the population. In middle-income countries such as Guatemala and El Salvador this requirement is linked to the fulfilment of social economic rights, i.e. the rights of second generation.

The assimilation of values of coexistence and civic participation has not been effective in the educative systems in the past decades, both because they had other priorities as for the social context of conflict which has characterized Guatemala and El Salvador. Today the governments recognize the need to introduce transversely into the curriculum the values formation, ethics and political involvement. In this sense they are making several amendments to the national curriculum to ensure this component within the national educational model.

Within this area should be addressed the issue of the integration of people who have emigrated abroad. One of the biggest challenges is its integration into the national projects. Although they are gone, they still retain ties with the country and its communities. They are not only a source of funds, but they can also make transfer of knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences received in the new countries in which they live. This cannot be left to individual dynamics but must be encouraged through policies and programs that foster the continuity of such linkages and their involvement in community development and cultural change programs.

Education for Peace

Various approaches have emerged on how to meet the challenge of violence in the region. Many have promoted government programs that searched to repress and punish

violent actions by increasing police control and judicial penalties (Hard hand Program in El Salvador). These have been ineffective in controlling and stopping the growth of violence and youth gangs.

Social violence that has characterized Guatemala and El Salvador after the end of the war and the peace accords has shown that peace is not merely the absence of conflict or violence. Instead, it needs to be integrated as part of the vision and culture of the people. As such it should be encouraged through educational processes that ensure understanding of its contents, facilitate the use of the mechanisms that promote it and generate commitment to its preservation.

For years it has been stressed, the need to adopt a strategy of prevention and integration based on a positive concept of peace. In this sense the concept of Education for Peace (EFP) has been proposed. The EFP is defined as the act of developing the intellectual and moral faculties of individuals toward a non-violent approach to conflict resolution. In this sense, peace is an attitude or disposition, understood not as a denial of the conflict but as willingness to solve without using violence and using other resources such as dialogue, negotiation, and cooperation. As such, the EFP is not only a proposal of individual values, but a vision of life and a world based on a set of shared community values that are opposed to the negative proposal articulated by gangs.[25]

Today we recognize the need to introduce Peace Education (CPE) at all levels of the educational system, ensuring a less violent and more cohesive society. Diverse experiences of Peace Education are being made in El Salvador and Guatemala which are serving as models for other experiences and to generate new educational processes. An example of these initiatives is the Programa Integral Juvenil Don Bosco (PIJDB), developed by the Saviour of the World Foundation in El Salvador. The PIJDB is a program of supplementary education to national curriculum aimed at high school students from public schools in the areas of greatest youth violence. The program develops four components: computers, sports, environment and peace education, which are offered for periods of two years. This program has benefitted already about 50,000 young students of approximately 60 public schools, with the Ministry of Education and Directors of schools as key partners in this process.

The attention to youth in public schools of areas where the PIJDB is applied is complemented through some training programs developed for spare time in oratory-youth centre and in the Youth Leadership Program. The latter aims to train young people in positive leadership, life skills training, support of peers, and social and community development projects that allow them to be agents of change in their context.

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[25]Cabezas, R- Gilsanz. J. – Sampayo, L., "Cohesión Social y Educación Para La Paz: Alternativas De Prevención De La Violencia Infant-Juvenil en El Salvador", *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals,* No. 81, (2008), pp. 91 – 108.

It is necessary to conclude by saying that while the problems and challenges faced by countries like El Salvador and Guatemala are large and complex, the solutions that are being developed, especially through education, are also innovative and encouraging. They are the result of reflection and joint efforts of many sectors of society, reflecting the growing awareness that the greatest challenges cannot be solved without the inclusion and participation of all members of society.