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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Schools as spaces for the construction of peace and coexistence. A possible proposal with elementary school boys and girls in Mexico

Las escuelas como espacios para la construcción de la paz y la convivencia. Una propuesta posible con niños y niñas de primarias en México

As escolas como espaços da construção da paz e a coexistência. Uma proposta possível com crianças e meninas de eleição prévia no México

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ABSTRACT. This research aimed to implement a Peace Education Project (PEP) in the first-grade classroom of a primary school located in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. The intervention promoted a set of prosocial competencies in students, teachers, and families; for this universal and focused strategies were developed. A mixed approach was used, with evaluations before and after. Information was collected through participatory action research. Some findings indicate that systematic PEPs in the classroom decrease violence and strengthen prosociability. There was a reduction in the school violence index from 1.12 to 1.10 and an increase in student prosociability from 3.34 to 3.70. The strategies favorably affected the maintenance of a school climate of cordiality, greater empathy, assertiveness, better management of emotions, and an increase in friendship networks.

RESUMEN. Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo la implementación de un Proyecto de Educación para la Paz (PEP) en un aula de primer grado de una escuela primaria

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Prosociabilidad, violencia escolar, educación para la paz, clima escolar.	ubicada en San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, México. La intervención promovió un conjunto de competencias prosociales en estudiantes, docentes y familias; para ello se desarrollaron estrategias universales y focalizadas. Se utilizó un enfoque mixto, con evaluaciones antes y después. Se recolectó información mediante la investigación-acción-participativa. Algunos hallazgos indican que los PEP sistemáticos en el aula disminuyen la violencia y fortalecen la prosociabilidad. Hubo una reducción en el índice de violencia escolar de 1.12 a 1.10 y un aumento en la prosociabilidad estudiantil de 3.34 a 3.70. Las estrategias incidieron favorablemente en el mantenimiento de un clima escolar de cordialidad, mayor empatía, asertividad, mejor manejo de emociones y aumento en las redes de amistad.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE Prosociabilidade, violência escolar, educação para a paz, clima escolar.	**RESUMO.** Esta pesquisa teve como objetivo implementar um Projeto de Educação para a Paz (PEP) em uma sala de aula do primeiro ano de uma escola primária localizada em San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, México. A intervenção promoveu um conjunto de competências pró-sociais em alunos, professores e famílias; para isso, foram desenvolvidas estratégias universais e focadas. Foi utilizada uma abordagem mista, com avaliações antes e depois. As informações foram coletadas por meio de pesquisa-ação participativa. Algumas descobertas indicam que os PEPs sistemáticos na sala de aula diminuem a violência e fortalecem a prosociabilidade. Houve redução do índice de violência escolar de 1,12 para 1,10 e aumento da prosociabilidade dos alunos de 3,34 para 3,70. As estratégias afetaram favoravelmente a manutenção de um clima escolar de cordialidade, maior empatia, assertividade, melhor gestão das emoções e aumento das redes de amizade.

1. INTRODUCTION AND STATE OF THE QUESTION

Violence is a constant problem in the lives of thousands of children around the world (UNESCO, 2019). This scourge, considered a violation of human rights (UN, 2006), manifests itself in multiple forms: physical punishments, offenses, emotional, sexual, gender abuse, among others (Galtung & Dietrich, 2013), and is often presented in protective environments such as home and school (UN, 2006; UNICEF, 2019th).

The prevention and intervention of violence in children is a fundamental right guaranteed by multiple international conventions and treaties. Regardless of economic, social, cultural, religious, or ethnic circumstances, thousands of children in the world live and observe real situations of violence in their lives (UN, 2016; UNESCO, 2019; UNICEF, 2014, 2019a); which causes harm, humiliation, pain, and triggers consequences that affect their physical, personal, social, and school development.

The diversity of ways in which school violence manifests itself, the multiple personal and social consequences it entails on students, teachers and families, show that it is a complex phenomenon. (Ayala, 2015), which provokes fractured relationships, distrust, stress, generates emotional wear, also promotes indiscipline, under educational exploitation, loss of respect, little collaborative work, difficulties in communication and social cohesion (Chaux, 2012; Danesh, 2011; Debarbieux, 2011; OECD, 2009; Olweus, 2006; UN, 2016; Saucedo & Guzman, 2018; UNESCO, 2019).

The UNESCO report, presented at the World Education Forum 2019, showed alarming data on school violence, including an estimated 246 million children and adolescents worldwide are victims of violence inside and around their schools. One in three students, or 32%, has been bullied by their peers at school at least once in the last month. Physical violence is the most

common, followed by psychological intimidation. Bullying affects boys and girls, although there is a higher prevalence of physical violence among them and psychological violence among girls is more common. Sexual harassment is the second most common form of violence in many regions of the world. There is an increase in cyberbullying through mobile devices. Minors perceived in some way as "different" are more likely to be intimidated. Physical appearance is the most common cause of intimidation, followed by race, nationality and skin color (UN, 2016; UNESCO, 2019).

This article aimed to present the main findings of the implementation of a PEP to promote prosocial competencies and prevent school violence in a primary first-grade group of an educational institution located in the municipality of San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas.

The following are theoretical and conceptual elements that support on the one hand the consequences (emotional, physical, psychological, educational, economic and social) associated with the early exposure of violence in children; the concept of prosociability, prosocial competences and how they can be promoted in school spaces are also discussed. Similarly, it addresses the characteristic elements of the PEPs, identifies how peace can be built from the individual, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international.

1.1. Consequences of early exposure of violence in children

Any type of violence against a child has a significant negative effect on its academic performance and academic achievement exploitation, mental health and quality of life; they are more likely to be depressed, lonely or anxious and have low self-esteem (Debarbieux, 2011; UN, 2016; Pinheiro, 2006; UNICEF, 2014).

The development of those who have been severely abused or abandoned in childhood is inadequate; they are very likely to have learning difficulties and low school performance; they may suffer from depression, which may lead to high-risk behaviors and self-destructive behaviors (UNICEF, 2014).

Many tend to miss classes frequently, are almost three times more likely to feel like strangers in school and at least two times more likely to be absent from it; they get lower educational results than their peers, are less successful in math and reading tests; in addition, the more often they are harassed, the more their academic use decreases. Because of all the above, they are more likely to leave formal education after completing secondary education (UNESCO, 2019).

When a child grows up in homes or communities where violence prevails, they can internalize these behaviors, naturalize them and adopt them as a way to resolve their conflicts in everyday life (Ghiso & Ospina, 2010). Those who suffer from violence in early childhood have a higher risk of developing various pathologies in later life (APA, 1996; WHO, 2016; UNICEF, 2014, 2017); increase the chances that they will fall victim to it again in a pronounced manner; in the worst case scenario, some researchers such as Chaux (2012), Finkelhor et al. (2009), Guerra et al. (2003), Lagerspetz et al. (1988) and Tarragona (2016) point out that they can repeat these behaviors towards their spouses and children. Similar consequences can be borne by children who witnessed violent episodes (Bandura et al., 1961).

Longitudinal studies have found that boys and girls who have been abused are more likely to be victims of violence in the later stages of life and/or to become abusers. Maas et al. (2008) concluded in various studies that "the time, duration and chronicity of mistreatment may influence the likelihood that the victim will present violent behaviour in the future"; moreover, that physical abuse in childhood is the type of violence that is most strongly associated with aggressive and violent behaviour in youth, which makes it possible to think that this type of phenomenon generates a transgenerational transmission of violence, and is a factor to be taken into account in the etiology of various mental disorders. In this regard, the APA (1996) noted that the occurrence of traumatic situations in childhood and adolescence seems to be associated with psychiatric problems throughout life.

The most decisive stage in the life of all children is their first five years, in which they lay the foundations for their physical, psychomotor and socio-emotional development. The vital importance for child development of an affectionate and attentive environment with good health, balanced feeding and stimulation is demonstrated (UNICEF, 2004). The promotion of positive attachment relationships with their parents, teachers and/or caregivers helps them to cultivate a balanced self-esteem, have a positive self-concept and self-control of emotions; many acquire capacities for stress control, peaceful conflict resolution and harmonious relationships with others.

> A boy or girl who is loved and constantly shown affection has a better chance of becoming a happy adult. It has been found that self-confidence, security, the ability to share and love, and even intellectual and social skills, have their roots in the experiences lived during early childhood in the family. In a home with an environmentof affection, respect, trust and stability, children are raised and develop more psychically healthy and safe, and will relate to the outside in the same way, with a more positive and constructive attitude towards life (p. 23).

On the contrary, the development of children who have been subjected to serious abuse, violence, neglect or abandonment is inadequate and can have tragic consequences on mental and physical health that can last a lifetime, in some cases, as mentioned above, from one generation to another (WHO, 2020; Tarragona, 2016).

> Fights, arguments, screams and tensions among adults are perceived by infants. The fear, insecurity and tension that these events cause alter the psychosocial development of the child. Living in an environment of prolonged tension increases the chances that the child will become ill and develop psychosomatic problems such as asthma, sleep disorders and appetite. Many childhood illnesses have a psychological origin. Children who are verbally or physically abused have shortcomings in psychomotor development, alterations in nutritional status and become more ill, are more insecure and find it more difficult to adapt to the social environment around them, whether in kindergarten, school, group of friends (UNICEF, 2004, p. 51).

Violence in childhood has negative consequences, as boys and girls tend to be fearful, dependent, uncreative, irritable, aggressive and lying, they come to feel rejected, develop feelings and desires for revenge, have bad self-image (UNICEF, 2004); they are at greater risk of engaging

in criminal behaviour, consuming psychotropic substances and engaging in high-risk sexual behaviour (WHO, 2020; UN, 2016).

Early exposure to violence is critical because it can have an impact on the mature brain architecture, leading to numerous immediate and permanent consequences for physical and mental health. In the case of constant exposure, including as a disease, disturbance of the nervous and immune systems can lead to social, emotional and cognitive limitations, as well as to behaviors that cause illness, injury and social problems (Perry, 2001).

Extreme cases of stress caused by mistreatment can alter the development of the nervous and immune systems; and contribute to heart disease, cancer, suicide and sexually transmitted infections (WHO, 2020). For Felitti et al. (1998), exposure to violence during childhood may also lead to greater predisposition to life-long social, emotional and cognitive limitations, obesity, and health-risk behaviors, such as addictive substance use, early sex, and tobacco use.

In addition to the tragic consequences for individuals and families, violence has serious consequences for societies in all regions of the world, causing serious economic and social costs arising from the poor development of the potential and capacities of minors (Pinheiro, 2006; UNICEF, 2014, 2017, 2018). The immediate and long-term impact it has on public health and the economic costs it entails undermine the investments made in education, health and child welfare, so we can point out that violence against children and adolescents also undermines the productive capacity of future generations (WHO, 2016; UN, 2016).

1.2. Prosociability and prosocial behaviour

One of the pioneers in research on prosociability is Dr. Robert Roche. Since 1982, he defines prosocial behavior as:

> [...] that tending to help, benefit another person or group of persons without a prior external reward to the author. These actions often involve some cost, risk or self-sacrifice on the part of the author. And they include a wide variety of behaviors: generosity, help in grief or distress, sharing possessions, donation, cooperation and in general participation in activities aimed at improving the well-being of others, reducing social injustices, inequalities and violence (p. 102).

Roche (1995) identified a wide range of actions in human interaction that would qualify as prosocial behaviors, including: physical help and service, care, verbal help, verbal comfort, giving and sharing, positive confirmation and valorization of the other, deep listening, empathy, solidarity, positive presence and unity. After 35 years of research on the subject, Roche and his collaborators propose PROT model (Prosocial Optimization Theory), noting that prosociability favors the construction of the identity of individuals (person-centered optimization), as well as their interpersonal and social relationships (Spinrad & Eisenberg, 2009), this without seeking material or extrinsic rewards.

A second element of prosociability is associated with helping others, generating positive reciprocity of quality and solidarity, safeguarding the identity, autonomy, creativity and initiative of the individuals or groups involved, but taking into account how they want to be benefited

(optimization focused on the recipient and his circumstances, needs and identity), (Roche & Escotorín, 2018).

Eisenberg (1999) highlights that prosociability is the ability to distinguish between good and bad action; between what is socially acceptable or not. Prosocial behaviors are identified when other people are helped, which implies an emotional, behavioral, and cognitive disposition for the benefit of others.

The operational definition of prosocial conduct used in this research includes the aspects studied by (Roche, 1982, 1995, 1999; Roche & Escotorín, 2018); first, a person with prosocial behaviors is someone who offers help to others, is cooperative, supportive and altruistic, expresses attitudes of closeness, attention, listening, empathy, availability for service to other people and groups; he knows how to trust, he establishes conversations that express patient acceptance and interested in the contents and objectives of the speaker, he knows how to work in teams, in complex environments, of uncertainty. He is a responsible, creative person, he accepts diversity, he knows how to resolve conflicts without resorting to aggression, all the above for mutual gain.

According to Meece (2000), prosocial boys and girls tend to be more successful and make more friends in school. Chaux (2012), Lacunza (2012), Roche and Escotorín (2018), have shown that promoting pro-social skills improves the emotional and moral development of individuals, decreases, prevents and extinguishes violent behavior, improves social and family relationships; has a positive impact on self-evaluation and evaluation of others.

In summary, prosociability promotes solidarity and positive relational reciprocity; promotes empathy, initiative and creativity; it helps to improve learning archivement (Spinrad & Eisenberg, 2009). It helps to optimize levels of social cohesion, which translates into an improvement in the practice of civic culture, in interpersonal relations (Caprara et al., 2012); in addition, it contributes to maintaining a better coexistence and greater social and personal well-being (Inglés et al., 2009).

1.3. Peace education projects

UNICEF (2019) defines peace education as a process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to bring about behavioural changes that enable people to prevent violence, resolve conflicts peacefully and create conditions that lead to interpersonal, intergroup, national or international peace.

Galtung identifies two types of peace, negative and positive, the first alludes to the absence of war, violence and aggression; it is defined as the apparent tranquility that comes from order and calm. Positive peace is the process of realizing justice at different levels of human relations; seeks to confront and resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner, in order to find harmony with others, with nature and with oneself (Galtung & Dietrich, 2013).

The philosophy of peace education holds that human beings are subjects of the processes of biological, emotional, intellectual, ethical and spiritual development (Danesh & Clarke-Habibi, 2012). For Galtung, a peace-building project must put the human being as a starting point, since people have the capacity for peace (Calderón, 2009).

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> When a human being is properly educated and trained, he will use his abilities, talents and energies to serve the creation of peace, justice and prosperity. The principles of a worldview founded on peace include the recognition that humanity is one, unity is expressed in diversity, and this is its greatest challenge. The recognition of diversity cannot be achieved through violence, but through open, creative, peaceful, just and unifying processes of decision-making and problem-solving (Danesh & Clarke-Habibi, 2012, p. 308).

The implementation of PEP requires attention to several elements: a) design of curricular contents and pedagogical methodologies focused on the construction and maintenance of peace; b) the practice of leadership; c) the creation of a culture of peace within and between schools; d) the generation of an atmosphere of trust; e) deep and sustained reflection on personal and group worldviews on peace and conflict; f) the implementation of peace-oriented opportunities and activities; g) the involvement of families and h) the maintenance of close community relations (Danesh & Clarke-Habibi, 2012).

The most promising initiatives for promoting and building peace in schools are currently in favour of multi-component strategies (McMahon & Slough, 1996), systemic and child-centred; many of them focus on the development and strengthening of competencies for peaceful coexistence. They use various levels of intervention simultaneously and approach the educational community as a whole, through the implementation of peace education projects, continuous teacher and family training sessions, development of curricula with a gender and human rights approach (Bassaleti & González, 2017; Chaux, 2012; Danesh, 2011; McMahon & Slough, 1996; Olweus, 2006; Roche, 1999; Roche & Escotorín, 2018; Varela et al., 2009).

Among the most effective models and programs is the Fast Track Program (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, USA); the School Coexistence Management Model: Paz Educa (Chile); the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) of the Institute of Violent and Destructive Behavior at the University of Oregon, USA; the Classroom Program in Peace (Universidad de los Andes, Colombia); the Olweus Programme for Prevention against Harassment (Research Centre for Health Promotion, University of Bergen, Norway); the H.B. Danesh Peace Education Program (Canada); the National Program for School Coexistence (SEP-Mexico); and the Comprehensive Prosocial Conduct Programme (Spain).

Multi-component programs that employ the development of prosocial competencies for peaceful coexistence (Roche & Escotorín, 2018; SEP, 2017), have shown greater effectiveness in building peace and preventing school violence. Consistent, systematic and long-lasting interventions are recommended to show significant effects. The systemic approach is more effective, as the impact can be greater if the individual is intervened in their context and taking into account their family, school and social relationships (Compañ, 2000).

2. METHOD

The overall objective of the project was to implement a Peace Education Project (PEP) in a first-grade classroom of a primary school located in the municipality of San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas[2].

The research was developed during the 2016-2017 school year and was proposed from a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) approach (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). For the quantitative part a quasiexperimental design was proposed with applications before and after. A questionnaire was applied to the group teacher and she administered a questionnaire that measured prosocial behaviors in her students. The qualitative stage was developed through the Research-Action-Participatory budgets (Balcázar, 2003). Teacher A participated in the development and implementation of a (PEP) in her first grade classroom during the school year. The aim of this project was to prevent school violence and promote pro-social behaviour among children and their families.

A systematic accompaniment was carried out in the implementation of the PEP, using information collection techniques such as classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with the group teacher3, management, administrative and focus groups with parents. The information collected in both stages, after being (tabulated/transcribed), was analyzed by SPSSS, Excel, Atlas.ti and Cmap Tools. Statistical tests, frequency analysis and indicators were implemented; for qualitative information hermeneutical units were used, codes and maps of categories were constructed that favored the analysis of the discourses.

2.1. Place and sample where the research was carried out

The state of Chiapas is located in the southeast of the Mexican republic; it has a wealth of biodiversity, extensive forests that host an infinity of animal, plant and mineral species. Its climate, aquatic, topographic, cultural and historical plurality offers multiple options for the cultivation of land and its natural resources, as well as for tourism. Historically it is an entity that has experienced political-religious problems, struggles for land, social inequality, defense for the uses and customs of its indigenous groups; this has resulted in delays in education, health, infrastructure and social development, as well as high rates of marginalization and poverty.

The statistics indicate that Chiapas accuses the greatest social delays and the lowest degree of economic development (Villafuerte & García, 2014); it ranks second in the country's highest marginalization index, with a very high degree of social backwardness (SEDESOL, 2020); the last position of the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2015) and has a large number of municipalities listed in the group of the 100 poorest and most marginalized municipalities in the country.

The city of SCLC is located in the Altos region of Chiapas; is a tourist spot, identified as "Magic Village". It has been the scene of various civil, political, social and religious problems.

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[2] This article was developed in eleven primary schools in Mexico (four in Hermosillo, Sonora, during the 2014-2015 school cycle) and (seven in SCLC, Chiapas during the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school cycles). A total of 3,200 students, 170 teachers, 22 managers and 165 fathers and mothers of families participated.
[3] He will refer to this teacher with the initial A., out of respect for her confidentiality and anonymity.

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According to the census (INEGI, 2015), 209,591 people live, of which 45.45% identify as indigenous, maintaining the characteristic phenotypic composition of the Amerindian ethnicities of the Maya region, are speakers of the Tsotsil and Tseltal languages.

Primary school T4 is located in this municipality, where the research was developed. This institution has 75 years of providing primary education services. It is a morning shift, currently working 6 educators who attend a student enrolment of approximately 150 students.

The sample used for the preparation of this article was the first grade primary group, composed of 35 students (18 boys and 17 girls)5; most of them were seven years old at the beginning of the research project. Teacher A. had four years of working in the educational institution. The levels of participation of the fathers and mothers of this group were high, they attended and collaborated in the activities convened in the project, they were awaiting the needs and activities of their sons and daughters. The teacher indicated that she maintained a good and direct communication with them.

2.2. Components of the intervention

The PEP included the development of multi-component strategies with students, teachers, administrators, managers, parents of the educational institution, some of these actions were universal and others focused (see table 1).

Table 1: Intervention components and activities developed in the PEP.

Intervention Components	Estrategias implementadas		
	Teachers, managers and administrators	Students	Parents
Universal	● Diploma Constructing schools for the pacific coexistence.	● Campaigns and fairs for the peace, cooperative games, assemblies, theater of marionettes, contests, workshops in the classroom on handling of emotions, resolution and mediation of conflicts, human rights, etc.	● Conferences ● Workshops ● Meetings ● Individual and familiar consultancies.
Focused	● Groups of teachers for the peace.	● Student Groups for the peace.	● Course Coexistence without violence. ● Groups of promoters of the peace.

Source: self made.

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[4] The initial T. will be used to refer to the educational center where the research was conducted.

[5] The decision to work with this first-grade group was due to the research team's intention to establish a focused look at the intervention; obtain information on the effectiveness of strategies, tools and methodologies; finally, the interest of the group teacher, since it was conducting master's studies in education and had to develop an educational intervention to obtain the degree.

The PEP attended two levels of intervention, a *universal component* offered to the entire student group, teachers and families in the school. Teachers and administrators participated in ten training sessions of 6.5 hours each through the diploma "Building schools to live peacefully". The research team implemented conferences, workshops, talks and advisories with participants. These activities were intended to prevent violence and promote peaceful coexistence.

The teachers in front of the group implemented two sessions with their students per week, through the development of leisure activities, the construction of teaching materials, storytelling, cooperative games, prevention campaigns, dynamics and strategies for the peaceful resolution and mediation of conflicts, emotional management, analysis of real or fictional cases, dramatizations, and specific activities addressing peace-building issues, human rights, respect for and attention to diversity, among others.

The second level of intervention was developed through the *focused component*, so groups of teachers, students and parents were formed.

a) **Group of Teachers for Peace (GDP):** they were made up of teachers from the school who voluntarily decided to participate. This group had as its objective the monitoring of the activities designed in the PEP of the school and they followed the schedule of activities of the project.

b) **Student Groups for Peace (GEP):** they were formed through an instrument that measured prosocial behaviors in students. The information gathered in this questionnaire helped build *"prosociability lists"* that identified students with high and low levels of prosociability. Six students participated in each group (four with the highest averages and two with the lowest averages). After the approval of the families, these students participated in 10-12 training sessions in prosocial competencies. These sessions were held within the school space and lasted one hour per week.

c) **Groups of Promoters of Peace (GPP):** made up of parents. These people participated in five training sessions of 4 hours each in the course "Coexistence without Violence". They called themselves peace promoters and facilitated the sessions of the GEPs supported by manuals designed for working with students. These materials contained playful activities (games, dynamics, stories, hypothetical cases, teaching materials, dramatizations, songs, etc.); included indications for the conduct of the sessions. Participating fathers and mothers of families should be interested in being promoters, having availability of time, being dynamic and responsible people.

The PEP developed, promoted and strengthened a set of prosocial competencies of four types: emotional (empathy, emotion management); communicative (assertiveness, argumentation and active listening); cognitive (perspective, critical thinking, consideration of consequences, generation of choices, interpretation of intentions) and integrative (peaceful conflict resolution, mediation, assessment of differences, social-democratic responsibility).

2.3. Intervention through PEP with 1st grade students

Teacher A. participated with her fellow teachers and school directors in the diploma sessions. In these training sessions they designed the PEP, which they implemented for seven

months. The project was initiated through the implementation of the instrument that measured prosociability. This questionnaire supported the identification of the teacher's perceptions of violence, prosociability, and the networks of friendship that her students had.

The instrument contains 10 items (five related to the level of prosociability and five to the level of violence). To quantify the replies each item were answered to identify the different situations in which each student could be prosocial or little prosocial. They were answered: never, once, two to four times and five times or more. In this sense, the higher the prosociability aggregate, the more prosocial the student is and the higher the violence aggregate is the less prosocial. The number of friends the students had was also reviewed. For each variable an individual and group index was constructed.

The questionnaire helped identify prosocial behaviors such as: number of friends of each student, if it is observed that students help other peers when they are alone, if they invite them to play, if they notice that there is a fight between their peers, if they try to stop the fight, or warn her teacher, they help a partner when they get hurt, also if they share their school supplies, or food at the time of recess.

Similarly, violent behaviors were evaluated such as: beating, kicking or pushing your peers, if they try to convince others to disturb others, if they have actions of discrimination between peers by not inviting them to play or to participate with them in some activities; if they invent gossip to laugh at a partner, if they insult or yell offenses or swearwords in or out of the classroom. It was also important to know whether the parents of each student are attending, participating or actively involved in the training of their children.

The information obtained was tabulated in an Excel sheet, which was exported to the SPSSS program, where the variables under study were analyzed: number of friends, prosociability and school violence. After doing a mean analysis, an index was established for each of these variables. Information was obtained on these variables to identify the rates obtained for boys and girls. The students who had the lowest rates in prosociability and the highest in violence were identified, with these student's teacher A. worked more directly with activities and techniques designed specifically in a personalized way.

After the analysis of statistical information, the list of prosociability was established and the students who would participate in the GEP were selected. In the case of 1st grade, there were two groups of six students each. Teacher A. invited some parents of her group to attend the course Coexistence without Violence. Four mothers participated in the course and were facilitators of the two GEP6.

This questionnaire was applied by the educator at the beginning and at the end of the project. Other techniques were also used to gather information; one of them was participatory observation, which allowed the research team to gather information first-hand, in a close, personal, interactive and constant way, both of the intervention work of the educator and of the

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[6] It was decided that they would work in pairs to support each other in developing the sessions with the six students.

implementation of the project in general. Information about the development of the PEP was systematically recorded through a field journal.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the changes observed in the variables prosociability, school violence and friendship networks recorded in the pretest and postest evaluations applied to students in the first grade of the school T. The quasi-experimental design allowed comparing the results at the start of the project and at the end of the project[7]; some of them are presented below.

a) Prosociability, violence and friendship networks in first grade primary students

The instrument for measuring pro-social behaviour, school violence and friendship networks provided valuable information that was initially analysed for the design of the PEP, as well as for the establishment of pro-sociability lists, which supported the identification of students with high and low levels of pro-social behaviour. It also provided data that underpinned the development of activities inside and outside the classroom. Graph 1 presents general information on these three variables:

Graph 1. Pretest and postest rates of prosociability, school violence and average number of friends of students in grade I of T. school, 2016-2017*.
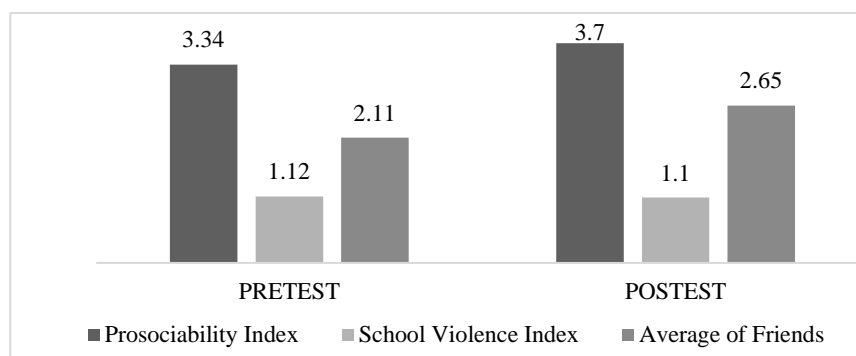
*Source: self made.

In the initial assessment the *prosociability index* was set at 3.34, while in the end an increase was observed, with 3.70. As for the variable *school violence*, in the pretest an index of 1.12 was established, while in the postest there was a decrease (1.10). In the variable *number of friends*, there was also an increase, since in the beginning this average was set at 2.11, while in the final evaluation it was placed at 2.65. These data indicate that, in general, the intervention was effective, since it managed to increase the rate of prosociability and the overall average of friends, while it was possible to decrease the rate of school violence.

These findings indicate that the use of multi-component strategies through projects focused on building peace and peaceful coexistence are effective in promoting pro-social skills and reducing violence, as demonstrated by international experiences such as the Fast Track Program (McMahon & Slough, 1996); Classrooms in Paz (Chaux, 2012); Paz Educa (Varela et al., 2009);

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[7] The PEP was implemented for seven months.

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the Peace Education Program (Danesh & Clarke-Habibi, 2012); the Comprehensive Programme of Prosocial Conduct (Roche & Escotorín, 2018); the Olweus Programme (Olweus, 2006); the PNCE (SEP, 2017), among others.

These programmes combine prevention/intervention/primary (universal), secondary (focused) and tertiary (specialized), that is, they use a continuous prevention system based on the public health perspective (Sugai & Horner, 2006), and target students, teachers, managers, administrators, families, and the community at large, as they see school violence as not an isolated problem, but as requiring a comprehensive approach (Pinheiro, 2006). They propose the development and strengthening of a set of prosocial competencies (Caprara et al., 2012; Chaux, 2012; Roche & Escotorín, 2018); reinforcement of positive behaviour; discouragement of inappropriate behaviour; direct, timely and comprehensive support for students requiring individualised care; accompaniment in the design of PEPs that are inclusive, systematic, systemic; the promotion of favourable school climates; among other actions.

Table 2. Levels of intervention and priority activities of multi-component programmes for the prevention/intervention of school violence*.

Primary or universal level	Secondary or focused level	Tertiary or specialized level
● Interventions directed to all the involved ones. ● Learning of social skills. ● High expectations of behavior and school use. ● Training and familiar sensitization. ● Positive Reinforcement. ● Proactive, firm, just and assertive - democratic Discipline. ● Development of transverse topics of EPP, human rights, prevention of the violence, pacific resolution of conflicts between others.	● Interventions directed to specific groups. ● Intensive Learning of social skills. ● Academic Support. ● Activities of self-control of the emotions. ● Training and family collaboration. ● Supervision and effective monitoring. ● Proactive, firm, just and assertive - democratic Discipline. ● Formation in specific topics on EPP, human rights, prevention of the violence, pacific resolution of conflicts between others.	● Interventions directed to specific persons. ● Intensive Learning of social skills. ● Plans of academic individual handling and of the behavior. ● Therapies and attention to families. ● Collaboration of multiple specialists. ● Proactive, firm, just and assertive - democratic Discipline. ● Direct Attention in specific topics on EPP, human rights, prevention of the violence, pacific resolution of conflicts between others.

Source: self made with adaptations of the proposals of (Chaux, 2012; Danesh & Clarke-Habibi, 2012; McMahon & Slough, 1996; Roche & Escotorín, 2018; Spinrad & Eisenberg, 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2006; Varela et al., 2009).

The most effective programs currently focus on the continuous, systematic and transversal development of these three levels of prevention, intervention and care of school violence; all of

them concentrate on the implementation of PEPs, promoting the strengthening, development and learning of pro-social competences to coexist peacefully.

Graph 2 presents comparative information on the pretest and postest applied. After a media analysis, changes in student behavior can be observed.

Graph 2. Pretest and postest indices obtained in the items of the questionnaire to measure prosociability and violence in students of the 1st grade of the T school, 2016-2017*.
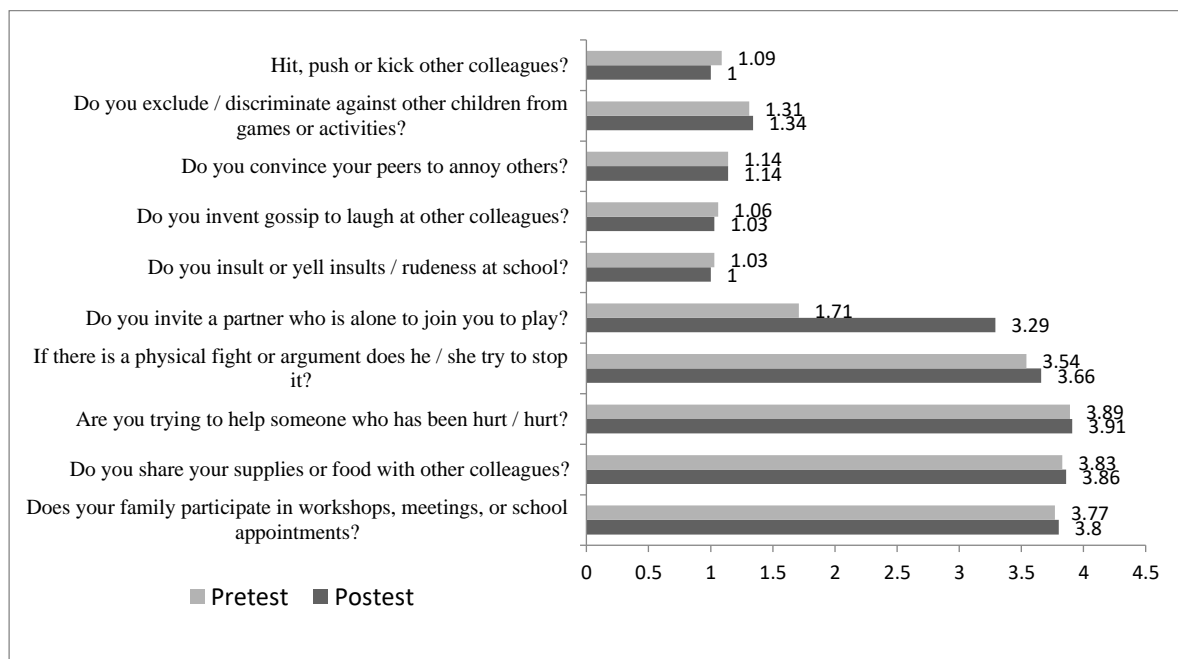
*Source: self made.

In the variables that measure school violence there is a decrease in some of them, others remain the same and in the variable that measured exclusion or discrimination between peers in some games or activities, there is an increase, from 1.31 to 1.34. This indicates that there were high cases in which some boys and girls did not want to play with certain partners, or in some cases had selective groups to do so.

An increase can be seen in all variables that measured prosocial behaviors; although it is striking that it measures invitations made by boys and girls when someone is alone. This speaks to the empathy and sensitivity towards others that was developed in various activities through teamwork, the resolution of problematic situations collectively, cooperative games, the analysis of hypothetical cases, stories analyzed in classes, among other activities; everything as a whole helped to develop this social competence.

Spinrad and Eisenberg (2009) point out that there are studies that have established relationships between empathy, aggression, behavioral problems and academic success; in addition, that the development of empathy involves family and environmental aspects. Teachers and classmates in the classroom can encourage prosocial behaviors, especially through the establishment of warm, close relationships through modeling and reinforcement of positive behaviors. School interventions focused on the development of social skills, empathy training,

cooperative work, improperly strengthen the prosocial behavior of children (Caprara et al., 2012; Eisenberg, 1999).

a) Accompaniment of students identified as "little prosocial"

The lists of prosociability provided an opportunity to analyze the changes obtained in the students, in particular, we were interested to know these changes in the five students who initially maintained the lowest averages of prosociability and highest in the variable violence (see graph 3). With this group the teacher programmed and developed extra activities to help strengthen the prosocial competencies.

These students had a particular intervention, they were observed directly in the group activities carried out, they were constantly motivated by reinforcing positive behaviors or the progress they were making; direct support was offered when they were unable or unwilling to work with their peers; they were given attention and listened to when they were restless or in need of support. Four of these students were also included in the student peace groups, so they participated in the ten sessions of work with the peace-promoting mothers of the family. Graph 3 shows the initial and final evaluations of these five students.

Graph 3. Prosociability indices (pretest and postest) of students of 1 grade of the T. school, selected to give focused follow-up[8], school cycle 2016-2017*.
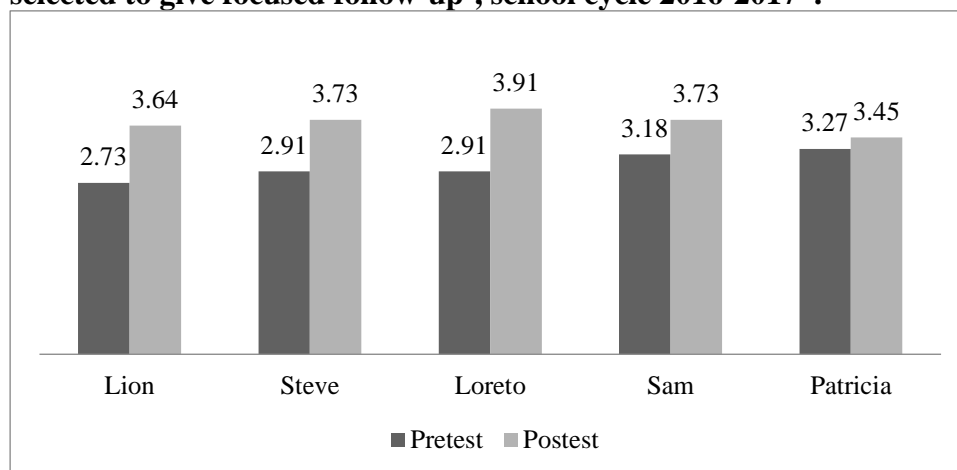
*Source: self made.

By looking at the initial and final indices we notice great changes in each one of them, we can see how they could improve their behaviors and walk towards being more prosocial students every day. In the interview with the group teacher, she stressed that they worked hand-in-hand with the parents of families of these students, were involved to support them in improving the behaviors of their children and in aspects of their school use.

The greatest advance is seen in the student "Loreto", who initially had a prosociability index of 2.91, while the final evaluation reflected an index of 3.91. This student initially showed behaviors such as: shouting at his classmates, pushing them in and out of the classroom, showing violence when working in teams, not participating in classes, and showing little interest in daily activities. At the end of the project there were very noticeable changes, teacher A. commented that

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[8] Pseudonyms were placed to respect the anonymity and confidentiality of these children.

she was more tolerant, accessible, friendly, cooperativeparticipatory, and sometimes was a positive leader at the time of working in teams; these changes were made known to this student's father and mother.

The targeted support offered to this group of students was based on the program (SWPBS9), that is, systematic and integrative activities were developed that aimed to promote, support and strengthen the positive behaviors of the students and not concentrate on the negative ones (Roche, 1982, 1999; Varela et al., 2009). The intervention was characterized by providing continuous and close follow-up with them, supporting them when they needed attention; demonstrate the gains achieved and include them in the group activities carried out.

Targeted interventions are not an easy task, if you want to reduce the impact, frequency and intensity of violence in schools (Chaux, 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2006). The researchers agree that systematic, constant and focused strategies in the development of prosocial competencies and - not in situations of violence, nor in punitive approaches - decrease the probabilities of their occurrence and increase (Danesh & Clarke-Habibi, 2012; McMahon & Slough, 1996; Olweus, 2006; SEP, 2017).

b) Prosociability and school violence, gender differences

One of the particular interests of this research was to know the learning and practice of the prosociability of boys and girls, and to know the ways in which violence is manifested by sex groups.

Graph 4 provides information on changes in applications (pretest and postest) by sex as to the variables analyzed*.
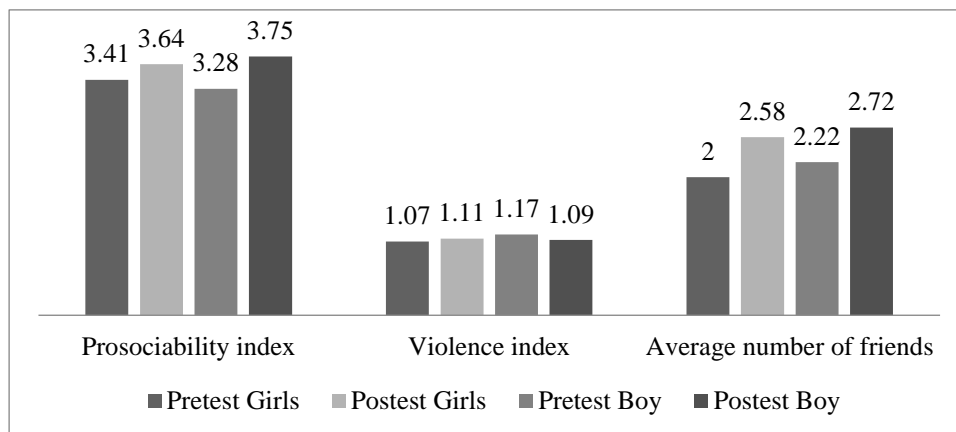
*Source: self made.

Chart 4 shows the changes in the overall prosociability index obtained by boys and girls in the pretest and postest evaluations. It is noted that in terms of the prosociability index, there was

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9 It is a program of interventions and positive school behavior support. Its goal is to create a social school culture that encourages interactions and positive behavior, while discouraging behavioral problems. It is also intended to promote safe school environments where students get a good educational advantage and build positive relationships. The approach is based on teaching students the desired behaviors, providing support when necessary, and recognizing expected behaviors; all based on empirical evidence, prevention and systems implementation (Sugai & Horner, 2006).

an increase in both cases in the final evaluations. Initially girls obtained an index of 3.41, the postest shows an index of 3.64 (there was an increase of 0.23 percentage points); for boys, the initial index was set at 3.28, and the final index at 3.75 (there was an increase of 0.47 percentage points). In the initial evaluations girls obtained a higher index than boys (0.13 percentage points), while in the final evaluations they obtained a higher index (0.11 percentage points). Although there are percentage differences in the initial and final index between boys and girls, they managed to increase their prosociability index to a greater extent.

In the case of the school violence index, girls initially obtained an index of 1.07 and in the final assessment an index of 1.11, that is, there was an increase in this index of 0.04 percentage points. The initially obtained by the boys was 1.17, while in the final evaluation they obtained an index of 1.09, showing a decrease of 0.08 percentage points. When comparing these results, it is noted that in the pretest boys obtained a higher index (1.17) than girls (1.07); in the postest it is reflected that they (1.11) obtained a higher index than the boys (1.09).

Based on these results, we can point out that the strategies implemented through PEP had an impact on the decrease in violence identified in the boys. In the case of girls, this result provides us with valuable information on the differences in the ways in which violence is carried out on first-grade primary students. One of the limitations of the study was that the teacher identified such forms of violence in the boys and girls in her classroom (before and after the intervention), but not on the recipients or victims of these violence, or towards whom suffersmost violence; which establishes new veins for future projects.

According to ECLAC, the phenomenon of school violence is widespread and cross-cutting in educational institutions; affects children of all classes and social groups; and occurs to a greater extent in public urban schools (Trucco & Inostroza, 2017). However, the gender differences in the forms, intensity and frequency of harassment is a debate that continues today. Research suggests that violence in schools is more prevalent in children, and the prevailing form is physics. In the case of girls, psychological and verbal violence is more common (UNESCO, 2019), which includes spreading rumors and social isolation.

When this topic is investigated in the group of teachers, they say that boys are more violent than girls (SEP, 2009). For Zárate and Cervantes (2011), they have a greater tendency to show violent behavior and less respect for established rules than girls; in addition, the direction of violence is directed towards actors of the same sex, which could be related to the stage of development, since in these ages they avoid the opposite sex.

Finally, graph 4 compares the average in the number of friends of the students, when comparing the averages of the pretest and postest evaluations, there is an increase. It can be seen that for children the initial average was 2.22 and for them it was 2.00; the final average after intervention of them was 2.72 and that of girls was 2.58. In analyzing these data we can point out that, in the case of girls, they had a greater increase than boys. It could be said that the increase in the number of friends in both groups may have been due to the set of activities carried out in the PEP, as well as the working sessions with the GEPs implemented by the promoters of peace.

Studies analyzing the relationship between the school climate and the levels of educational use indicate that students who live together in spaces of respect, tolerance, empathy, collaboration, work in teams, have a greater willingness to learn, than those who do in violent and hostile environments (Debarbieux, 2011).

Due to the increasing in research analyzing the development of prosociability in the classroom, in Ibero-America, educational policies have begun to be developed that integrate this dimension as a central theme for the improvement in the use of education, especially aimed at the most marginalized sectors. A trend observed since the beginning of this century has been to encourage the participation and integration of the actors involved in the educational process: students, teachers, managers and families (UNESCO, 2015), that is, to invite the entire educational community for the development of joint projects that aim to promote more peaceful and inclusive environments.

The implementation of PEP with the intention of improving peaceful coexistence is a challenging task, on the one hand, not enough training courses and/or teacher updating are encouraged for the design of educational projects, national programs set key objectives, but the guidelines and rules of operation are confusing and not plausible. There are ambiguities when implementing the actions, as an example, in many cases it is thought that only carrying out joint activities will promote the establishment of better positive interpersonal relations, in fact, closed groups are constituted, accentuated by exclusion criteria, there is no real team work.

The most effective international recommendations for reducing school violence focus on non-regulatory rather inclusive strategies; constant teacher training in peace education; explicit and prevention-oriented legislation; solid investigations; curricula that include human rights and citizenship topics; as well as the use of integral methodologies that favor collective action and peaceful coexistence. However, in everyday practice, the processes and interpersonal relations between the various educational systems and actors are sometimes difficult to modify by the policies, administrative provisions implemented through the "regulations of coexistence" and by traditional pedagogical approaches that prevail in the teaching collective. Such actions emphasize the reduction of school violence with punitive and control approaches; strategies based on threats and sanctions against teachers and students; many of them do not consider it important to include families and other social institutions in projects as external to schools, all of which reduce opportunities for promoting coexistence.

In this sense, Bryk and Driscoll (1988) identified five characteristics of the school community that may be related to the overall effectiveness of an educational center: a system of shared values about the purpose, mission, and vision of the school; a common agenda of activities designed to promote meaningful social interactions among members of the educational community; clear expectations for students, educational staff and families; high interest in student learning; and social relations characterized by affection and cohesion. We can conclude that the PEP implemented in this classroom matches these five characteristics and seeks to highlight them in all intervention components.

The proposed PEP used an approach of training, development and strengthening of prosocial competences for peaceful coexistence; these were the basis that guided the strategies and

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activities implemented in the classroom and in the school in general. The method used a systemic approach (Compañ, 2000), impacting the auric, teaching, administrative and family system, as well as structural subsystems, pedagogical and academic dimensions, family dynamics, forms of communication, school discipline and interpersonal relationships between participants. For the UN (2016), interventions in schools with a systemic, comprehensive and multisectoral approach not only reduce violence, but also help reduce school absenteeism, improve academic achievement, strengthen social skills development and the well-being of children.

4. CONCLUSIONS

After the implementation of the PEP, there is evidence of an increase in the practice of prosocial competencies in the participating students, the the group teacher comments that her participation in the diploma helped her improve practices that, according to her, "were not the most appropriate to promote coexistence and prevent violence." The families participated actively in the intervention components of the project, attended the meetings, four mothers participated in the course "coexistence without violence," four workshops were held in the classroom with an average participation of 15 parents. The formation of two GEPs was achieved, with the support of the mothers promoting peace.

The group called "Prosocial Chiapas Children" worked for ten sessions of one hour each, and the group "Jaguares" did so in eleven sessions of one hour each. The peace promoters of both groups commented that the experience pleased them very much, that at first it was difficult, since they did not all integrate, or participate. With the passing of the sessions, activities, games and dynamics, children shared more and learned new ways to resolve conflicts through peaceful means. They also commented that in a short time they saw results in the change of behavior of some students (more receptive, kind, tolerant, communicating better what they felt and using in their vocabulary the word peace, prosocial, respect, empathy). They noted that the manuals are easy to use and appropriate for the age of the students.

After the systematic observations made in the classroom, it can be noted qualitatively that the group is much more participatory, the children smile in the classroom, have fun and keep their attention to the indications offered by the teacher. At the time of the recreation, small groups were observed sharing their food, others played with their peers and with students of other school grades. In the interviews with the teacher, the director and the promoters for peace, they indicated several aspects that we highlighted:

1. There is more participation of students in the activities of the hall, they worry more about doing the activities and they notice better interactions between them.
2. Boys and girls who once resolved their conflicts through beatings, now warn, question others for the aggressive actions they perform, there are very few fighting events between them.
3. Participation of families is observed, they are attentive, attend meetings and after-school activities, collaborate, organize, maintain direct communication and are happy with the results that are being obtained with their sons and daughters.
4. The participating promoter mothers commented that it was very rewarding to work with the group, who learned to coordinate for the sessions. They pointed out that they highly

valued the confidence of children in telling them about their home experiences, which personally impacted them and that in general the experience was a lot of learning for them. They also noted that they were able to share with their children and couples the topics addressed in the classes.

5. In interviewing the head of the school, she said that she notes the most involved group, has raised their grades and has generally improved indiscipline. She gives credit for the positive results to the activities carried out by the teacher and the mothers promoting peace.

Some observations described in the field diary indicate that the students managed to adapt to the group and put into practice a series of pro-social competencies to coexist peacefully, presented changes in their behavior and became more participatory in classes, increased their networks of friendship, there was an improvement in the climate of relationships at school, changes were observed in students presenting aggressive behaviors and greater participation of the educational community.

When analyzing the quantitative information obtained in the group from the instrument that measured prosociability, the initial and final indices of the students were compared. The results indicate substantial progress; it is noted that the intervention had positive effects on the participating children, so we could conclude that the promotion of prosocial behavior, which includes the development of skills to live together, is an essential element if the school climate is to be improved.

The qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that PEP was effective in school and particularly in the first-grade classroom. The experience gained in this group helped to give specific guidelines on the effectiveness of the instruments, materials and strategies proposed. By adding together all the results and progress achieved in the intervention components, it can be concluded that the promotion of prosociability is possible, and this helps in the prevention and reduction of violence.

Schools should be the ideal space for education based on peaceful coexistence. However, promoting a comprehensive education where students develop both academically, personally and socially is a difficult task. Developing academic content and at the same time offering tools to live with others in a harmonious way is a great challenge. In this sense, schools have an ethical responsibility to offer spaces that promote prosocial competencies for peaceful coexistence that help to train solid citizens who can cope with the adversities that current life calls for.

Conflicto de intereses / Competing interests:
Los autores declaran que no incurren en conflictos de intereses.

Rol de los autores / Authors Roles:
José Duarte: conceptualización, curación de datos, análisis formal, adquisición de fondos, investigación, metodología, administración del proyecto, recursos, software, supervisión, validación, visualización, escritura - preparación del borrador original, escritura - revisar & amp; edición.

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