

# Preface

The last and lasting image I have of Elise Boulding and her husband Kenneth Boulding was during the 14th Conference of the *International Peace Research Association* (IPRA) in July 1992 in Kyoto, when she was taking care of her husband Kenneth in a wheel chair. We first met 25 years earlier during the 7th IPRA conference in 1977 in Oaxtepec, Morelos in Mexico. This was a very depressing period for Latin America when most countries were ruled by military dictatorships. It was also the second conference in a Third World country after the 5th IPRA conference in Varanasi, India in 1974. This also coincided with the Southern efforts for a New International Economic Order in the aftermath of the oil shocks and the global economic crisis of 1974.

During the Mexican conference, the *Latin American Council of Peace Research* (CLAIP) was established when scholars, activists and former policy makers of all Latin American countries were present. Hundreds of intellectual and political refugees had fled from different military regimes in Latin American and were living, researching and teaching in Mexico. After the Mexican conference, I had Elise and Kenneth for lunch together in my home. We then discussed the limits of dependency theory that did not address the underlying deep structures of patriarchy, which has created inequality and conflicts all over the world. As a survivor of the Burundi civil war in 1965, I had started to work on peace and conflict resolution. With my Latin-American colleagues and friends, since 1977 I got actively involved in IPRA's and CLAIP's activities. I agreed with Elise that food security was a key issue for a peaceful future and that the chronic undernourishment of a child will produce irreversible brain damages. Inspired and encouraged by Elise, I got fully involved in IPRA as a council member, convener of the Food Study Group and later of *Ecology and Peace Commission* (EPC), as an executive member of council, chair of the council and as IPRA's only female President (1998–2000).

As activists, researchers and peacemakers working for a just and lasting peace we were conscious about the unequal distribution of wealth on earth and within countries. Together with Elise we agreed that the existing mechanisms of war, violence and exploitation prevented a peaceful co-existence and that women were systematically discriminated against. Elise insisted that the arms race could only be overcome and the war system be eliminated if the United Nations would take a more active role in promoting peace. To resolve the political problems related to disarmament and peacebuilding, an active involvement of women would be necessary. For Elise and Kenneth it was clear that human survival depended also on a sustainable management of natural resources. Elise understood that the well-educated white middle class used a disproportionate share of these resources, but that a worldwide movement would be required to achieve a sustainable future. Her example as a scientist, mother, spouse, and peace activist was for me a source of inspiration. We understood the similarity and the cruelty of the civil wars and genocides in Central America and of the Vietnam War. We also agreed that reconciliation was necessary, but that each region had its different social contexts for achieving a durable peace agreement. However, nonviolent efforts also require a stable peace, where the involvement of women is essential. We joined efforts with Betty Reardon and with the support of UNESCO we promoted peace initiatives at the local level, including indigenous societies. During the 1980s Latin America returned to democratically elected governments. Most refugees returned to their countries, and many took over high-level responsibilities in governments and with multilateral institutions. Nevertheless, the high inequality in Latin America did not disappear and several male peace researchers, when they were in public office, had forgotten that social inequality has been a root cause of violence. Therefore, it was necessary to involve more women in decision-making processes. As a leading American leader of the *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom* (WILPF), Elise pushed for an active role of women in developing countries. She tried to overcome the social 'invisibility' of women and their work in any society, when she concluded: "In all societies, women's contribution has been auxiliary in nature; helping to get things done rather than in work which assumes direct responsibility and authority for what is done" (Boulding 1969: 307–308).

Elise provided with her writing, teaching and her daily life a solid grounding for women's participation and women's contribution toward a peaceful social change. In her daily life with five children and in her teaching and writing in the USA and abroad, Elise Boulding combined also the local and the global. She always treated people and other nations with respect, and tried to understand what other cultures are contributing to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Elise understood the colonial imposition of roles, the laws and social organizations of conquered countries and continents and she was aware that these processes of conquest have

impeded global efforts to learn and to deal differently with conflict and conflictive situations:

The basic point is ... that we have much to learn from people whom we have defined as our 'pupils'—people we thought we were going to teach... [P]olitics depends on making people category-conscious, and then bargaining for rights for each category—from status internationally to the right to community control of schools and a neighborhood... I am glad I am an educator, and don't have to either build up or tear down categories—but cut across them... (EB archives, Box 12, folder 41, cited in Morrison, 2005: 93).

Elise Boulding had an enviable energy, centering her work in the daily tasks, but without forgetting the global peace and conflict processes. She divided her time among reading scientific articles, working on the IPRA newsletter, serving as international Chair of WILPF, caring for her family as the mother of five children, wife of Kenneth, teaching at the university, travelling to international meetings for peace research and peacebuilding, being active within the *Consortium on Peace, Research, Education and Development* (COPRED—now known as the Peace and Justice Studies Association), contributing as an active member to the Quaker community, participating in the *Peace Education Commission* (PEC) of IPRA, and working to reduce the growing threat of increasing environmental deterioration. She had to learn to deal with these competing demands and found a way to consolidate her scientific career, nurturing her growing family, finding space for her spiritual needs and having enough time to travel and be actively engaged with multiple peace processes all over the world. Her life showed that it is possible to deal with all these conflicting pressures and still have time for students or friends to talk with them and to promote networking. Often she told that her most important educational space was her family and the family was the center for peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

...because I am always aware of local-global connections myself wherever I am and whatever I am doing, I try to share that sense of connectedness in whatever setting I find myself ... if we are to have more realistic and viable planning for world order, more people must see the connections between the family, the local habitat and the international sphere (Boulding 1989: 163).

In multiple writings Elise expressed her view on the importance of working both locally and globally for teaching peace. It appears that during her whole life, and from this 'glocal' perspective she developed her central work: *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History* (Boulding 2000). In cooperation with UNESCO multiple discussions took place and it was the women's side in the discussions which influenced the plural of 'cultures of peace' and not only of a 'culture of peace' in singular, because this singular was understood as an occidental imposition. Cultures of peace must move away from lectures and classrooms and she told in her classes "...education for peace should ideally be a field in which out-of-school education..." occurs, because students may get the impression that school is isolated from their daily life and emerging conflicts.

The program promoted by UNESCO that was supported by many Nobel Laureates led to the 'Decade for a Culture of Nonviolence' (2000–2010).



Elise Boulding and Úrsula Oswald Spring near Elise's assisted living residence. *Source* Úrsula Oswald Spring's personal photo collection

The UNESCO program included a definition of power as active nonviolence; the promotion of people to build understanding, tolerant and solidarity; participative democracy able to replace vertical and hierarchical power structures; abolishment of warfare; open and free flow of information; power sharing among women and men; empowered women as centers of peacebuilding and care and restoration of the environment. This synthesis reflects the crucial ideas of Elise about peacemaking in everyday life in families, at the workplace, in schools and communities. To promote women and children as peace builders opens new space in world history and for local scenarios for conflict resolution. Women and children were always considered as the outsiders, the marginalized, so now they may be able to develop new approaches to a more peaceful world order.

Without taking a radical feminist approach that women alone were able to bring peace, Elise was more pragmatic. She stated that the traditional work done by women, such as nurturing, educating kids, caring for children and the elderly, as well as negotiating conflicts and tensions were typical women's tasks. Her availability to take a job or to do a voluntary task was part of her character to serve any peace initiative. During a severe crisis within IPRA she accepted to become its

Secretary-General in 1988 up to 1990 when the Cold War was also winding down. When she organized the next international conference, she was aware that many young women and men from developing countries could not join the conference without scholarships for flights and accommodation. Therefore, she became a cofounder and accepted to become also president of the *IPRA Foundation* (IPRAF) in 1989, to enable scholars and young people from developing countries to meet and to work with peace researchers from the north. One of her favorite ideas she stated was “a listening culture is any group of people who are really listening with the heart to each other. They are practicing peace culture.”

Elise Boulding was able to combine in her work issues of peace, women, environment and the future. Inspired by the American anthropologist Margaret Mead, and the Swedish policymaker and diplomat Alva Myrdal, both peace educators and peace builders, she insisted that women possess power even if they are not always aware of it. This women’s power is basically ‘power with’ and not ‘power over’, thus power relations that promote networking, connectedness and establishing relationships, far away from hierarchy and dominance. It is probably this understanding of power, which allowed Elise to achieve all her often-contradicting tasks so effectively.

During her whole life Elise was conscious that she was an immigrant child from Norway and that the views of her mother had tempered her vision on the USA as materialistic, egoist and rude. Whenever she had the opportunity to help, she understood other migrants, their difficult situation as undocumented migrants and especially, the refugees who had to flee from a conflict region and live in difficult conditions in a foreign country. These child experiences opened her mind and her heart to understand other people and to find compassion for people in need. We both worked for the United Nations University and we were both convinced that only a transdisciplinary, international community of scholars, a solid think tank may offer a capacity and bridge building between social science and the work of the United Nations and that these abilities may support also developing countries.

Elise was aware of the dominant role of the USA in world politics and was influential through her appointment by Jimmy Carter to the Congressional Commission on Proposals for the National Academy of Peace and Conflict (later to become the U.S. Institute of Peace). But she was never appointed to its board during the Reagan Administration and thought that she must “have a big FBI file”. Nevertheless, she continued to promote peace and conflict resolution at the national and international level. When she retired from Dartmouth (1985), she returned to Boulder and together with Kenneth they moved to the 624 Pearl Street apartment. In the early 1990s Kenneth fell ill and Elise gave up most of her outside activities to care for him. They went for the last time to teach together in Japan and it was precisely in Kyoto where I saw both together for the last time during the 14th IPRA conference in 1992. He was sick in a wheel chair and she cared with love for him. Besides taking care of her husband, she participated in the discussion on peace in the Middle East and was an active member throughout this conference. The results were published in 1994 as *Building Peace in the Middle East: Challenges for States and Civil Society*.

After Kenneth died in 1993, she moved to live in an apartment built by her daughter and son-in-law attached to their house in the Boston area and became active in many Boston area peace and justice organizations, developing a special relationship with the Boston Research Center for the Twenty-First Century (now the Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning and Dialogue). We met for the last time in 2007 during the preparation for the book *Handbook on Building Cultures of Peace*, edited by Joseph de Rivera (2009). Later I had the opportunity to meet her in her apartment-room in North Hill Retirement Center, where she moved in 2000. It was the last time we had tea together and had the opportunity to speak about peace and peacebuilding I told her also how much she influenced me in my work in Mexico and worldwide. Elise had introduced me also to several international organizations. We shared the commitment for a peaceful, equal and sustainable world, where women from North and South, East and West could promote a peaceful future together with children. Elise has been one of my most important mentors, who persuaded me to get deeply involved in international and Latin American peace research and peacebuilding. Many thanks dear Elise and I hope that with this new book we can promote and disseminate your precious ideas in order to promote a more just, equal, equitable, sustainable and peaceful world.

April 2015

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Elise Boulding: A Pioneer in Peace Research,  
Peacemaking, Feminism, Future Studies and the Family  
From a Quaker Perspective

Boulding, J.R. (Ed.)

2017, XXI, 178 p. 31 illus., 20 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-31363-4