Peace education in formal schools

Why is it important and how can it be done?

December 2020

International Alert

International Alert works with people directly affected by conflict to build lasting peace.

We focus on solving the root causes of conflict, bringing together people from across divides. From the grassroots to policy level, we all come together to build everyday peace, from the ground up.

Peace is just as much about communities living together, side by side, and resolving their differences without resorting to violence, as it is about people signing a treaty or laying down their arms.

www.international-alert.org

British Council

The British Council builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language.

We help young people to gain the skills, confidence and connections they are looking for to realise their potential and to participate in strong and inclusive communities. We support them to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications. Our work in arts and culture stimulates creative expression and exchange and nurtures creative enterprise.

www.britishcouncil.org

Peace education in formal schools

Why is it important and how can it be done?

December 2020

Caroline Brooks and Basma Hajir

Contents

Executive summary

This report explores what peace education in schools looks like, its potential impact and how it might be realised in practice.

The research involved a literature review exploring the purpose, theory and practice of peace education, including case studies of peace education programmes delivered in formal schools within various conflict-affected contexts. Key issues and questions emerging from the review were then investigated through interviews with leading peace education academics and practitioners.

The report argues that there is a strong case for advancing the understanding and practice of peace education in formal schools and that schools can play a crucial role in furthering the aims of peace. After all, formal schools not only provide knowledge and skills, but they also shape social and cultural values, norms, attitudes and dispositions.[1]

Peace education interventions in schools have been proven to result in improved attitudes and cooperation among pupils, and decreased violence and dropout rates.[2] However, mainstreaming peace education is not straightforward. The space for peace education needs to be found within existing systems, where complementary work can be undertaken.

Advancing peace education within a formal school context requires a multifaceted approach and process. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but there are some key principles and approaches that are necessary:

▶ **promoting healthy relationships and a peaceful school culture;**

▶ **addressing structural and cultural violence within schools;**

▶ **taking account of the way education is delivered in the classroom;**

▶ **connecting peace education approaches focused on the individual as well as wider socio-political outcomes;**

▶ **connecting peace education within schools to wider community practices and non-formal actors, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs); and**

▶ **where possible having education policies and legislation that support peace education to achieve full integration into formal school settings.**

---

1 Tony Jenkins, Managing Director, International Institute on Peace Education, interview by Basma Hajir, Skype, 2020

2 I.M. Harris, Peace education theory, Journal of Peace Education, 1(1), 2004, pp.5–20; M. Aubrey et al, Teaching peace, building resilience, International Alert, 2016

RECOMMENDATIONS

▶ School leaders should establish and promote a school ethos that aligns with the main values and principles of peace and examines and addresses the structural and cultural factors that sustain violence in schools.

▶ Peace education approaches should aim to go beyond curriculum development and work on internalising particular skills, competencies, values and practices, both within the classroom and beyond it.

▶ Peace education initiatives in formal schools must be accompanied by training for teachers, and the school leadership more broadly, in order to be authentic and systemic and for teachers to be able to adequately support the development of their students. Such efforts should be based on and informed by an understanding of the institutional and environmental barriers to integrating peace education in the specific context.

▶ The form of education inside the classroom should combine individual approaches to peace education with approaches that focus on socio-political outcomes, and help students realise their own contribution to conflict dynamics in wider society.

▶ Efforts to advance peace education should be situated within the broader structure of the policy and legislative environment, where it is appropriate to do so. This is an area in which many challenges can arise. However, in the interests of sustainability and overall impact, opportunities to link local non-formal efforts to more formal structures and processes should be explored.

▶ Global coordination and collaboration between practitioners and policy-makers is needed to increase learning and exchange, advance both theory and practice, and link individual initiatives to wider and more systemic global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Introduction

In 2018, International Alert collaborated with the British Council and RIWI to conduct a Peace Perceptions Poll.[3] The primary goal of the poll was to answer questions around how people experience and respond to violent conflict, and how they think their government should respond to conflict. Through the Peace Perceptions Poll, more than 100,000 people in 15 countries – from those in active conflict to those in relative peace – were asked about their views on peace and conflict. A significant percentage of respondents to the survey perceived that governments needed to invest in peace education to achieve sustainable peace. More specifically, there was an almost universal support for "teaching peace, tolerance and conflict resolution in schools". This report aims to unpack what teaching peace in schools means, what its potential impact can be, and how it might be achieved in practice.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS

First, a literature review was conducted. The review started with a broad lens that synthesised literature on the theory and practice of peace education, and explored the purpose of peace education, its theoretical location, different empirical approaches, critiques, responses, and challenges. The review included case studies and examples of peace education programmes delivered in formal schools in contexts with various conflict dynamics, including a post-conflict context (Bosnia and Herzegovina), a conflict-affected context hosting large numbers of refugees (Jordan), and a context of protracted conflict (Afghanistan).[4] The review drew out the key issues and led to the formulation of critical questions for further exploration.[5] The emerging themes and questions arising from the literature review were then investigated through seven semi-structured interviews with leading peace education academics and practitioners, including teachers with experience in multiple country contexts.[6] Interviewees drew on both theoretical debates and academic research, as well as practical first-hand experience of working on peace education and related topics (such as global citizenship and social justice) in contexts including the United Kingdom (UK), Colombia, South Korea, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, the United States (US), India, and the Philippines. A synthesis analysis of the literature review, case study examples, and interview transcripts was then conducted to arrive at the main findings presented in this report.

Due to the wide range of contexts covered in the research, this report does not attempt to make specific or detailed recommendations about how peace education should be integrated into formal school systems in particular countries or contexts, nor does it attempt to prescribe what the content of a peace education curriculum should look like – both of these endeavours would require context and conflict sensitivity and case-by-case analysis and exploration. Rather, this report attempts to set out a number of conceptual considerations and broad practical recommendations around how peace education could be infused within existing formal school structures and systems. It is hoped that these can be taken up by educators, school leaders, and policy makers in local and national governments, and practitioners working in non-formal education.

---

3   J. Egan, Peace Perceptions Poll 2018, International Alert, https://www.international-alert.org/publications/peace-perceptions-poll-2018

4   For more on the case studies used in this research, see H.B. Danesh, Towards an integrative theory of peace education, Journal of Peace Education, 3(1), 2006, pp.55–78; H.B. Danesh, Education for peace in Bosnia and Herzogovina. How do we know it is working?, in C. Del Felice, A. Karako and A. Wisler (eds.), Peace education evaluation: Learning from experience and exploring prospects, Information Age Publishing, 2015, pp. 145–161; Generations for Peace Institute, Participatory evaluation assessment of the effectiveness of a peacebuilding programme delivered in eight schools in Amman, Irbid and Zarqa, Generations for Peace Institute, 2015; J. Corboz et al, What works to prevent violence against children in Afghanistan? Findings of an interrupted time series evaluation of a school-based peace education and community social norms change intervention in Afghanistan, PloS one, 14(8), 2019. An overview of the case studies is provided in Annex B.

5   See Annex C for key questions and themes.

6   See Annex A for profiles of interviewees.

What is peace education?

Various definitions and conceptions of peace education have been put forward by leading scholars, which share the common idea that the aim of peace education is to counter a culture of war by promoting a culture of peace.[7] A culture of peace has been defined by the United Nations (UN) as "a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations".[8] To this end, peace education challenges the assumption that violence is innate to the human condition[9] and aims to transform the content, pedagogy and structures of education to deal with various forms of violence.[10]

The ultimate desired purpose of peace education programmes is to trigger a transformation of individual and community relationships characterised by polarisation, dehumanisation and delegitimisation, towards reconciliation, solidarity, and tolerance.[11] It seeks to equip students with the capacity to resolve conflicts without recourse to violence, and enable them to become responsible citizens who are open to differences and respectful of other cultures.[12] It aspires to overcome exclusive ideologies and address social structures that perpetuate a culture of violence, including repressive educational structures.[13] With its values-oriented goals and mission, peace education aligns with declarations of the UN, the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), transnational conferences and other civil society and international organisations.[14]

The focus of peace education spans a wide range of topics and empirical approaches including conflict resolution education, which focuses on individual and interpersonal skills such as anger management, emotional awareness, empathy, assertiveness and self-worth. Additionally, there are creative conflict resolution and communication;[15] anti-bullying programmes that focus on strengthening cooperation and kindness;[16] peer mediation projects;[17] and restorative approaches.[18] Other approaches go beyond individual and interpersonal skills and include topics such as international education, development education, environment education, and human

7   Y. Rosen and G. Salomon, Durability of peace education effects in the shadow of conflict, Social Psychology of Education, 14(1), 2011, pp.135–147

8   UN Resolutions A/RES/52/13: Culture of Peace and A/RES/53/243, Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace

9   D. Adams, Toward a global movement for a culture of peace, Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology: the journal of the Division of Peace Psychology of the American Psychological Association, 6(3), 2000, pp.259–266

10   B.A. Reardon, Education for a culture of peace in a gender perspective, UNESCO, 2001; I.M. Harris and M.L. Morrison, Peace education, McFarland, 2003; M. Bajaj, Encyclopedia of peace education, Information Age Publishing (IAP), 2008

11   D. Wehrenfennig, D. Brunstetter and J. Solomon, The Olive Tree Initiative: Lessons learned about peace education through experiential learning, in C. Del Felice, A. Karako and A. Wisler (eds.), Peace education evaluation: Learning from experience and exploring prospects, IAP, 2015, pp.179–184

12   K. Kester, Developing peace education programs: Beyond ethnocentrism and violence, Peace Prints: Journal of South Asian Peacebuilding, 1(1), 2008, pp.37–64

13   W. Wintersteiner, Towards a more complex evaluation of peace education, Peace education evaluation. Learning from experience and exploring prospects, 2015, pp.19–37

14   For example, see UNESCO 1974 and 1995 Recommendation used to measure progress towards education target 4.7, UNESCO Education Sector, 15 July 2016; S. Fountain, Peace education in UNICEF, UNICEF, 1999; Hague Appeal for Peace conference, 1999; Earth Charter Commission, The Earth Charter, 2000

15   I.M. Harris, Peace education theory, Journal of Peace Education, 1(1), 2004, pp.5–20

16   R.A. Heydenberk and W.R. Heydenberk, From risk to resilience, in C. Del Felice, A. Karako and A. Wisler (eds.), 2017, Op. cit., p.85

17   H. Cremin, Peer mediation: Citizenship and social inclusion revisited – Citizenship and social inclusion in action, New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2007

18   E. Sellman, H. Cremin and G. McCluskey, Restorative approaches to conflict in schools: Interdisciplinary perspectives on whole school approaches to managing relationships, Routledge, 2013

Muslim and Christian students studying together in Bosnia and Herzegovina. © Richard Wayman/Alamy

rights education.[19] There are also some programmes that draw on cross-cultural studies and social justice education.[20] Peace education thus overlaps with and encompasses topics and issues such as global citizenship, planetary stewardship, and social justice. When it comes to understanding peace education in formal schools, there remains a lack of clarity in the literature as to what peace education might aim to achieve within the parameters of these formal institutions, and what processes and/or practical steps might be needed to advance its implementation. This report sets out to fill this gap.

19 I.M. Harris, 2004, Op. cit., pp.5–20

20 H.B. Danesh, 2015, Op. cit., pp.145–161

Peace education in formal schools

Broadly speaking, the findings of this research reveal that peace education in formal schools should ideally aim to produce caring, compassionate, critical, and civically engaged citizens who can advance cultures of peace. It should aspire to develop individuals who:

▶ **are healthy members of a healthy peaceful community;**

▶ **have personal, social, emotional, and interpersonal skills;**

▶ **are capable of empathy and solidarity both within and across geographic borders and social groups; and**

▶ **are able to deconstruct foundations of violence (such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, racial injustice, gender disparity, ecological degradation) and take action to advance the prospects of peace.**

In what follows, we focus in more detail on what this research tells us about the processes and the systems that would support these ideal outcomes of peace education, how they can be developed, and how they are interconnected.

WHY IS PEACE EDUCATION IMPORTANT TO DEVELOP IN FORMAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS?

There is some criticism of formal schools as being sites of violence – including direct, cultural, and structural violence[21] – and also some doubt that schools provide enough of an enabling environment in which the aims of peace education can take root.[22] However, the findings from this research show that formal schools provide not only knowledge and skills, but they also shape social and cultural values, norms, attitudes, and dispositions.[23] Through education schools can support children and young people to build positive relationships and create safe learning environments where children thrive.[24] Moreover, according to published data and studies, including the three case studies examined for this report, peace education interventions have been proven to result in improved attitudes and cooperation, and decreased violence and dropout rates.[25]

Given the importance of schools in the lives of children and young adults, and the need for concerted efforts to work within educational environments to develop cultures of peace, there is a strong case for advancing the understanding and practice of peace education in formal schools and to highlight the crucial role schools can play in furthering the aims of peace on the micro and macro levels. The next section explores how this might be done in practice.

21 M. Haavelsrud, Conceptual perspectives in peace education, in M. Bajaj, 2008, Op. cit., pp.59–66; R. J. Burns, Problems of legitimation of peace education, Three decades of peace education around the world: An anthology, Garland Publishing, 1996, pp.113–128. This report uses Galtung's analytical concepts of direct, structural and cultural violence, and positive and negative peace (J. Galtung, Violence, peace, and peace research, Journal of Peace Research, 6(3), 1969, pp.167–191). While achieving negative peace depends upon abating direct violence, reaching positive peace is much more difficult because it requires mitigating the cultural and structural factors that underscore and contribute to direct violence (I.M. Harris, 2004, Op. cit.). Cultural violence includes biased norms and social practices, while structural violence refers to unjust laws and institutional policies. Without addressing the underlying cultures and structures that support direct violence, war and violent conflict will remain at best dormant and are likely eventually to re-emerge.

22 K.D. Bush and D. Saltarelli, The two faces in education in ethnic conflict: Towards a peacebuilding education for children, UNICEF, 2000

23 Tony Jenkins, Managing Director, International Institute on Peace Education, interview by Basma Hajir, Skype, 2020

24 Norwegian Refugee Council and International Alert, Manual for supporting social cohesion in schools, 2018 (unpublished)

25 I.M. Harris, 2004, Op. cit., pp.5–20; M. Aubrey et al, Teaching peace, building resilience, International Alert, 2016

HOW CAN PEACE EDUCATION BE ADVANCED WITHIN FORMAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS?

> *"If we don't attempt to find ways to bring peace education into [schools], the obstacles for peace education become larger and larger and larger... I think we have to strategically look at the best ways to approach and influence peace education in those various formal contexts."[26]*
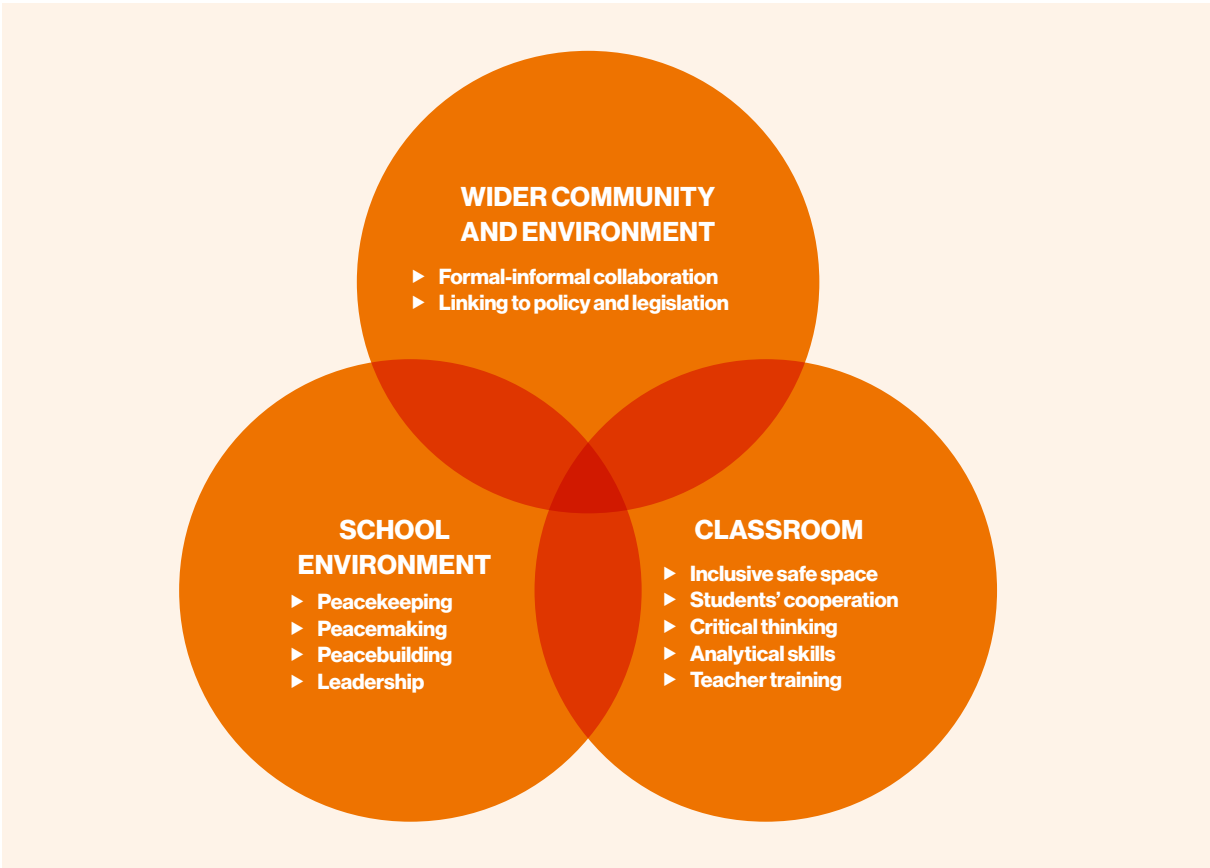
The literature review and interviews suggest that effectively advancing peace education within formal schools requires a multifaceted approach and process, combining psychological and socio-political dimensions as well as important pedagogical implications. Specifically, it necessitates:

▶ **promoting healthy relationships and a peaceful school culture overall;**

▶ **addressing issues of structural and cultural violence within schools including teacher support and the promotion of conflict awareness and peacebuilding values;**

▶ **taking account of the form of education inside the classroom, i.e. the way in which it is delivered and packaged, not just the content of the curriculum;**

▶ **combining and connecting peace education approaches that are focused on individual transformation and interpersonal relationships as well as wider socio-political outcomes; and**

▶ **connecting efforts to advance a culture of peace within schools to wider community practices and initiatives including policy-making.**

The remainder of this report is organised around these core issues, which will be discussed in turn.

Figure 1: The multidimensional nature of peace education in formal schools

WIDER COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT
▶ Formal-informal collaboration
▶ Linking to policy and legislation

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
▶ Peacekeeping
▶ Peacemaking
▶ Peacebuilding
▶ Leadership

CLASSROOM
▶ Inclusive safe space
▶ Students' cooperation
▶ Critical thinking
▶ Analytical skills
▶ Teacher training

26 Tony Jenkins, Managing Director, International Institute on Peace Education, interview by Basma Hajir, Skype, 2020

Healthy relationships and peaceful school culture

ADDRESSING THE OVERALL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

To advance peace education in formal schools, the overall school environment and the practices inside the classroom must be critically addressed. It is necessary to bring awareness to where structural violence might be present in schools and to work towards implementing peace values, techniques, and ideas. This approach clearly goes beyond thinking about the content of a peace education curriculum, and addresses how to build healthy school environments in which the values and principles enshrined in the concept of peace education – and a culture of peace in general – can take root. The research suggests that making this shift requires an investment in establishing and promoting a school ethos that aligns with the main values and principles of peace, and the examination and elimination of the structural and cultural factors that sustain violence in schools, such as repressive institutional policies and forms of discipline/punishment, and biased norms and social practices. Cremin and Bevington argue that to do this the three dimensions of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding must be robustly and critically applied by the school leadership and staff.[27] One way to achieve this is to focus on the following critical questions:

▶ **Peacekeeping: How can we keep children safe in schools and eliminate direct violence in ways that do not have unintended consequences that might be harmful to young people's wellbeing, mental health and thriving?**

▶ **Peacemaking: When a conflict has occurred, how can we respond to it using more child-centred methods, rather than punitive and authoritarian methods? (Examples of peacemaking measures are: restorative approaches to discipline, peer mediation and circle learning.)**

▶ **Peacebuilding: How can we proactively reduce barriers to learning and tackle issues of wellbeing and equity, and move towards achieving an inclusive and cohesive school community?[28]**

Answering these questions relies on the willingness of school leadership to reflect on their practices and to choose to prioritise certain values and culture within their schools. School leaders are therefore critical to the effectiveness of this process. Indeed, as one interviewee with more than 20 years of experience working in education stated:

> *"The role of school leadership is not to be underestimated… A leadership that instils in teachers the notion of autonomy and freedom is needed. A leadership that encourages teachers to innovate, try new practices, not to be afraid of errors, to reflect, learn, unlearn, and try again."[29]*

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOURS AND VALUES

Linked to, and arguably flowing from, the overall school environment and the leadership therein, are the principles and values that are promoted in the classroom and the way in which they are promoted and sustained by school staff – especially teachers. Children's experiences in the classroom are part and parcel of creating

27 H. Cremin and T. Bevington, Positive peace in schools: Tackling conflict and creating a culture of peace in the classroom, Taylor & Francis, 2017

28 The link between inclusive, safe environments and less violence has been comprehensively articulated in the World Health Organisation's (WHO) INSPIRE framework (WHO, INSPIRE: Seven strategies for ending violence against children, 2016). In its most recent report, the WHO has shown that establishing a safe, inclusive and enabling school environment substantially reduces the physical and emotional violence that students might experience (WHO, Global status report on preventing violence against children, 2020).

29 Rhian Webb, Senior Teacher for Adults, British Council, interview by Caroline Brooks, Microsoft Teams, 2020

more democratic school structures.[30] The practices and principles that are modelled by teachers and expected of students in the classroom can therefore go some way to achieving the goals of peace education as outlined in this report.

The research suggests that within the classroom attention must be paid to the students' emotional wellbeing (happiness, confidence, and security), psychological wellbeing (resilience and autonomy) and social wellbeing (good interpersonal relationships). To create environments and experiences that support this, classrooms must offer an inclusive and safe space for meaningful participation, dialogue and communication, encourage students to cooperate, and promote students' critical thinking, analytical tools, and skills in triangulating sources.[31] As one interviewee explained,

> *"We need to build the basic skills of communication, speaking, listening, cooperation, self-esteem, and valuing yourself, and also valuing of the other as well. Right from the nursery schools ... we can encourage young people to talk about themselves and listen to other people to get a sense of the other, to be able to work with everybody in the class ... and for them to begin to develop social and emotional skills, which mean that they are a healthy member of a healthy peaceful community."[32]*

One critical factor in ensuring that these things can become mainstream practices is teacher training, development and resourcing.

TEACHER TRAINING, CAPACITY, AND RESOURCING

Developing effective systems of professional support that promote teachers' capabilities is vital to increase possibilities for peace education values and principles to be reflected in the classroom and the school environment. At a basic level there is a need for teachers to

be able to understand and identify structural and cultural factors that sustain violence, and have the capacity to counter some of this within the school environment and to raise awareness of these factors in their students. However, to make a significant shift within the classroom, teachers need to have internalised and be able to model the types of behaviours and values that are at the heart of peace education approaches. Where this process does not happen – where teachers are required to implement a peace education curriculum which they themselves do not practise or support – the results can be either haphazard or completely undermined.[33]

This is especially the case in conflict-affected contexts where teachers may be resistant to teaching certain values or may have views that go against the grain of the curriculum. As one interviewee put it: "If you impose a curricula objective on a teacher who does not agree with the values politically, they're going to teach it in a way that is obviously not right."[34] Another interviewee – a teacher with extensive experience of working in conflict-affected contexts – explained that, in her experience, not all teachers are ready to speak about peace because "they are not convinced that this peace can come... You have the teachers who are reluctant [to teach peace education], who are still very angry, who have personal stories to share, who are not happy to explore peace."[35] Moreover, it is important to note that the home environment, and parents/caregivers in particular, are key constituents for peace education. When parents are resistant to or disengaged from non-violent education principles it difficult for teachers to change behaviours and students receive mixed messages.[36]

Faced with such resistance and barriers to effective implementation of peace education, this report suggests that it is necessary for teachers first to go through a process of exploring what peace education might look like in their context, the barriers they might

30   K. Kester, T. Tsuruhara and T. Archer, Peacebuilding education in post-truth times: Lessons from the work of Betty A. Reardon, in D.T. Snauwaert (ed.), Exploring Betty A. Reardon's perspective on peace education: Looking back, looking forward, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019, pp.29–39

31   M. Peters, The information wars, fake news and the end of globalization, Educational Philosophy and Theory, 50, 2018, pp.1161–1164; B.A. Reardon, Patriarchy, pedagogy, and learning toward a culture of peace, Voices for a Culture of Peace: Compendium of the GSI-USA Culture of Peace Distinguished Speaker Series, 2013, pp.77–91

32   Hilary Cremin, Senior Advisor of Cambridge Peace and Education Research Group, University of Cambridge, interviewed by Basma Hajir, Skype, 2020

33   Kevin Kester, Assistant Professor of Comparative International Education and Peace/Development Studies, Seoul National University, interviewed by Basma Hajir, Skype, 2020

34   Tony Jenkins, Managing Director, International Institute on Peace Education, interview by Basma Hajir, Skype, 2020

35   Maria Nomikou, staff member, British Council, interview by Caroline Brooks, Microsoft Teams, 2020

36   For example, see: L. Khattab, School for stability: Examining the role of education in fostering social stability in Lebanon, International Alert, 2017

face in implementing it, and how it might be labelled. Teachers may have to develop their own knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards peace education in a way which is authentic and meaningful to them and their contexts, rather than to simply adopt and apply the curriculum in their classrooms. As one interviewee reflected, based on her own experience of training teachers in both conflict-affected contexts and contexts of relative peace: it is important to develop "a framework for peace education, where educators feel confident and comfortable enough to experiment... that's where you have to start – with experimentation and exploration".[37] In addition, the research suggests that it may be beneficial to explore collaborations and partnerships with non-formal actors or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisation (CSOs) which have peace education as part of their mandates and who can bring context-specific experience and support to teachers as they begin to implement peace education in their classrooms. The issue of formal/non-formal collaboration will be returned to in later sections of the report.

37   Rhian Webb, Senior Teacher for Adults, British Council, interview by Caroline Brooks, Microsoft Teams, 2020

The content of the peace education curriculum

In addition to addressing the school environment, it is necessary to look at the form and content of the peace education curriculum when exploring how it can be advanced in a formal school setting and how its impact can be maximised.

This report does not advocate for a one-size-fits all approach to curriculum development or content. Any education initiative must be grounded in the real lives of the teachers and students who engage with it. There is no blueprint for peace education that will work in all contexts; however, this report suggests that there are some key principles and approaches that should inform peace education in formal school settings to advance the broader aims of peace education and to conceive of it as one part of a wider process of peacebuilding.[38]

COMBINE INDIVIDUALISED AND SOCIO-POLITICAL APPROACHES TO PEACE EDUCATION

As discussed, there is a need to promote wellbeing and self-esteem among students and to equip them with skills to manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts. This can only happen effectively and sustainably in an environment that enables and promotes such practices. However, this psychologised and individualised approach to peace education has been criticised for failing to address broader social issues, such as human dignity, gender equity, and political division,[39] and for not looking beyond the immediate triggers of violence to address deeper structural and cultural causes of violence.[40] In not addressing structural and cultural causes of violence, the individualised approach to peace education has been criticised for fostering passivity and perpetuating, rather than addressing, social ills.[41] Without addressing broader socio-political issues and raising awareness of structural and cultural violence, it has been suggested that peace education may "become part of the problem it is trying to solve".[42]

In the wake of this criticism, calls abound to link peace education programmes that focus on the individual level with social and global justice endeavours. The call is to develop students' critical consciousness to identify different power dynamics that shape their social, political, and economic reality. Within this vein, peace education (which overlaps with and encompasses global citizenship and social justice) facilitates students' engagement with contentious local issues affecting their country and explores how policies and practices in their own countries are connected to what happens in other countries – including conflicts and natural disasters.[43] Moreover, within this approach, students develop an awareness of how violence is perpetuated and are able to recognise both global and local injustices, and hierarchies and asymmetries of power, thus shifting the focus from the individual to broader society and global issues.

This report suggests that these two approaches – the individual and the socio-political – are neither antithetical to each other nor mutually exclusive, and that there is greater impact and benefit to be derived from seeking to combine approaches into a holistic and comprehensive model and conceptualisation of peace

38   M. Novelli, M.T.A. Lopes Cardozo and A. Smith, The 4Rs framework: Analyzing education's contributions to sustainable peacebuilding with social justice in conflict-affected contexts, Journal on Education in Emergencies, 3(1), 2017, pp.14–43

39   L.D. Soto, How can we teach about peace when we are so outraged?, Taboo, 9(2), 2005, p.91

40   K.D. Bush and D. Saltarelli, 2000, Op. cit.; M. Bajaj, 2008, Op. cit.; K. Kester and H. Cremin, Peace education and peace education research: Toward a concept of poststructural violence and second-order reflexivity, Educational Philosophy and Theory, 49(14), 2017, pp.1415–1427

41   M.G. Wessells, Cosmology, context, and peace education: A view from war zones, in P.P. Trifonas and B. Wright (eds.) Critical peace education: Difficult dialogues, Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2013, pp.89–99

42   M. Zembylas and Z. Bekerman, Peace education in the present: dismantling and reconstructing some fundamental theoretical premises, Journal of Peace Education, 10(2), 2013, pp.198

43   B. Hajir and K. Kester, Toward a decolonial praxis in critical peace education: Postcolonial insights and pedagogic possibilities, Studies in Philosophy and Education, 39, 2020, pp.515–532

education that recognises the importance of both individual change and transformation and its importance towards achieving wider structural transformation.[44] Achieving such a synthesis in practice, however, is a large ask requiring a long-term and multifaceted approach, as well as a level of confidence and ability to navigate potentially sensitive and controversial issues. As an academic working in South Korea interviewed for this report explained, it is challenging for schools to move beyond psychosocial support for students to tackle broader issues of social justice:

> *"It's easy to do psychosocial [but] maybe I want to be a critical practitioner and talk about Israel and Palestine, talk about North Korea and South Korea, talk about ... anti-Japanese sentiment here [in South Korea]. That's super sensitive. So, a lot of educators who want to do that are going to be hesitant to take that route. Because they're going to have their administration on top of them and their parents on top of them. So, the psychosocial route is much more of the safe [route in certain contexts]."[45]*

One suggestion for how a synthesis of the two approaches could occur in the context of the UK was offered by one interviewee, who envisages a "spiral curriculum" that is integrated within schools from pre-school through to the end of high school. At one end of the spiral the basic skills of communication, speaking, listening, cooperation, self-esteem, and valuing others are being built – the "social and emotional skills, which mean that they are a healthy member of a healthy peaceful community".[46] From this starting point, schools can start to work to develop links to and an awareness of global issues and to "reach outwards, globally, with all kinds of interventions that enable young people to bring the world into the classroom and to make those same connections that they feel for somebody on the next table, they need to feel that for somebody on a different continent".[47] This sort of approach could not only create a more holistic and integrated approach to peace education, it could also combat the distorted view that some young people have about people in other countries.

44   B.A. Reardon, Toward a paradigm of peace, in B.A. Reardon and D.T. Snauwaert (eds.) Betty A. Reardon: A pioneer in education for peace and human rights, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2015, pp.109–120; T. Jenkins, Reardon's edu-learner praxis: Educating for political efficacy and social transformation, in D.T. Snauwaert (ed.), Exploring Betty A. Reardon's perspective on peace education: Looking back, looking forward, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019, pp.199–205

45   In other contexts, working on psychosocial issues is not an easy or safe route to take. Kevin Kester, Assistant Professor of Comparative International Education and Peace/Development Studies, Seoul National University, interviewed by Basma Hajir, Skype, 2020

46   Hilary Cremin, Senior Advisor of Cambridge Peace and Education Research Group, University of Cambridge, interviewed by Basma Hajir, Skype, 2020

47   Ibid.

Connecting peace education in schools with wider community practices

TAKE A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO PEACE EDUCATION

Schools do not exist in a vacuum and it is important to recognise the contexts in which they operate and the experiences of the staff, students, and wider communities. This report suggests that taking a community-based approach to peace education, and understanding the different attitudes, narratives and influences to which students might be exposed outside the school environment, is therefore a critical factor in the ultimate success and sustainability of peace education programmes.

The research highlights the importance of collaboration between the formal schools, non-formal actors in the wider community and those working in the provision of non-formal players such as NGOs and CSOs. As one teacher interviewed for this research remarked: "I have seen that whenever a school works with an NGO, and trainers from the NGO visit the school and organise something together, both teachers and students are very empowered, because they bring a new methodology potentially, a new knowledge." Another practitioner said: "Teachers very often like working with the non-formal sector, because they bring the expertise and knowledge, new methodologies, and the great new atmosphere at school. They certainly bring new added value."

One successful example of a community-based approach to delivering peace education is the Help the Afghan Children initiative.[48] This is a non-formal organisation that worked closely with formal schools in Afghanistan to address social issues to reduce the use of violence against and between children, and to change harmful gender relations and practices. In addition to developing a curriculum that tackles the targeted issues, the programme also involved the wider community and targeted representatives of women's CSOs and staff from government departments, establishing peace committees across the communities. It also reached out to parents and families through radio messaging.

Another example of this type of collaboration can be found in the work of The Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR). AHDR is an inter-communal, non-governmental, non-profitable association, established in 2003 in Nicosia, Cyprus. The work of AHDR offers a successful example not only of formal and non-formal collaboration, but also of the support of other local and international partners, such as the Council of Europe, EUROCLIO and teacher trade unions across the conflict divide. AHDR brings in peace education trainers from all over the world to present different perspectives to their teachers, and has been described as "exceptional in terms of allowing practitioners to make meaning and engage in critical analysis of all approaches".[49]

---

48   Help the Afghan Children is a national and international NGO working in Afghanistan, whose mission is to empower children and local communities by promoting innovative educational programmes that enhance their lives and help them become productive citizens. J. Corboz et al, 2019, Op. cit.

49   Monisha Bajaj, Associate Professor of international and multicultural education, University of San Francisco, written response to research questions, 2020

CONNECT PEACE EDUCATION WITH EDUCATION POLICY AND LEGISLATION

The findings of this research highlight that education policies and legislation that support peace education are necessary to achieve full and systematic integration; however, working in the policy space and in relation to legislative changes are not enough in and of themselves, are challenging to achieve, and/or are problematic due to their political nature.

Systematically implementing peace education in schools often requires backing by a policy directive or piece of legislation. Such directives, however, often need to be backed up and pushed through with the support of civil society and NGOs who might have to "hold the intention of those reforms" for them to be really effectively.[50] As Jenkins explains using the example of the Philippines, there is a government policy mandating peace education in schools, but the onus of implementation is really on the teachers and civil society representatives, with little follow-up support from government.[51]

In addition, education policy is, by definition, a political space and when certain practices or curricula are mandated as part of a political process, the risk of "extreme political views" coming into the education system is elevated. Jenkins reflects that, with the change in political leadership in the Philippines over recent years, policies including education policies have been used to integrate the political views of the incumbent political parties into wider society.[52] This can create a situation in which peace education is normatively and even legislatively supported, but is in fact being rolled out in a policy framework and political context that undermines its effectiveness.

Navigating this space is thus a challenging task and may not be appropriate in every context. However, where it can be pursued, the research suggests that it should happen in conjunction with non-formal approaches, bottom-up initiatives at the level of individual schools and communities, and via connection and collaboration between actors who are working in or have an interest in advancing peace education within schools.

EXPLORE GLOBAL COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

While recognising that one size will not fit all when it comes to the content and form of peace education, and that there is a need to ground peace education programmes in each specific context, another theme that emerged from our findings relates to the idea of global coordination of peace education efforts.

Price's study offers several lessons on the contribution of education programmes to peace and stability.[53] One core recommendation is the importance of fostering collaborative partnerships which would enhance the integration of education system reforms into broader policy frameworks for social justice and social cohesion. This would require coordination and collaboration of stakeholders in both formal and non-formal sectors. Also, the need for collaboration between education specialists, peacebuilding specialists and the broader development field in a systems-thinking approach.

The benefit of such coordination and collaboration includes increased learning and exchange between peace educators in different cases, countries and communities, and the building of networks around the world.[54] However, while recognising some benefit, interviewees and findings from the research caution against coordination for coordination's sake, and underline the importance of having clear purpose, balanced membership (between practitioners and academics, and between those from the global north and global south[55]), and avoiding the temptations to set global standards and models of peace education. As Tony Jenkins explained: "Anytime we

50   Tony Jenkins, Managing Director, International Institute on Peace Education, interview by Basma Hajir, Skype, 2020

51   Ibid. More on peace education in the Philippines can be found in L. Navarro-Castro, Peace education in the Philippines: My journey as a peace educator and some lessons learned, The Journal of Social Encounters, 4(2), 2020, pp.90–95 and T. Swee-Hin, V. Cawagas and J. Nario Galace, Three decades of peace education in the Philippines: Stories of hope and challenges, Philippines: Center for Peace Education, Miriam College & World Council for Curriculum and Instruction, Philippines Chapter, 2017, pp.266

52   Tony Jenkins, Managing Director, International Institute on Peace Education, interview by Basma Hajir, Skype, 2020

53   R. Price, Lessons learned from education programmes' contribution to peace and stability, IDS, 2019

54   Rhian Webb, Senior Teacher for Adults, British Council, interview by Caroline Brooks, Microsoft Teams, 2020

55   The term 'global south' is not related to different stages of development, cultural difference or geographical location. In line with Dados and Connell (2012), the expression is used to denote geopolitical relations of power and to refer to countries that are wrestling with unjust global power dynamics and legacies of colonialism, imperialism, neoliberalism and patriarchy. That said, limitations of the term and concerns around possible negative effects of its use on enhancing problematic north-south dichotomies are acknowledged. N. Dados and R. Connell, The global south, Contexts, 11(1), 2012, pp.12–13

A school teacher stands in her classroom ready to teach her female students in Kabul, Afghanistan. © Danita Delimont/Alamy

set a particular standard, what educational institutions and policies often do is that they end up placing a greater emphasis and value on the outcomes of the process, rather than on the process itself, and the purpose is guided by the intention of that learning."[56] The intention of global coordination, then, is not to set standards to which members should adhere, but rather to orient peace educators around certain guiding principles that are rooted in an analysis and best practices and approaches and to allow space for "deepening the understanding of the broader purposes of peace education

towards the pursuit of cultures of peace".[57] One potential area where this sort of collaboration and coordination could be achieved is by linking efforts to the discourse and action around Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) on education and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, which guides the international community towards achieving SDG4 and calls for the strengthening of the ability of governments to deliver peace education, among other things.[58]

---

56 Tony Jenkins, Managing Director, International Institute on Peace Education, interview by Basma Hajir, Skype, 2020

57 Ibid.

58 While it is not explicitly mentioned in SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions, the link is being made: https://www.peace-ed-campaign.org/the-contributions-of-peace-education-to-sdg-16-peace-justice-and-strong-institutions/

Conclusions and recommendations

This report has explored broadly what teaching peace in formal schools might entail and has highlighted some of the main challenges, opportunities, and considerations around integrating peace education in formal school systems. The research has found that advancing peace education within formal schools requires a multifaceted approach and process, which combines psychological and socio-political dimensions, as well as having important pedagogical implications. Operationalising such an approach is a challenging endeavour and there are evidently a number of challenges and constraints to doing so. Mainstreaming peace education is neither linear nor straightforward. Radically changing formal schools is an overly ambitious and unrealistic endeavour. It is therefore necessary to find the space within existing systems where complimentary work can be carried out. In this vein, several key recommendations have emerged from the research which can be taken forward by practitioners, policymakers, and others working in the field of peace education:

1 **School leaders should establish and promote a school ethos that aligns with the main values and principles of peace and examines and addresses the structural and cultural factors that sustain violence in schools.**

2 **Peace education approaches should aim to go beyond curriculum development and work on internalising particular skills, competencies, values, and practices, both within the classroom and beyond it.**

3 **Peace education initiatives in formal schools must be accompanied by training for teachers, and the school leadership more broadly, to be authentic and systemic and for teachers to be able to adequately support the development of their students. Such efforts should be based on and informed by an understanding of the institutional and environmental barriers to integrating peace education in the specific context.**

4 **The form of education inside the classroom should combine individual approaches to peace education with approaches that focus on socio-political outcomes, and help students realise their own contribution to conflict dynamics in wider society.**

5 **Focus on and situate efforts to advance peace education within the broader structure of the policy and legislative environment, where it is appropriate to do so. This is an area in which many challenges can arise; however, opportunities to link local non-formal efforts to more formal structures and processes should be explored in the interests of sustainability and overall impact.**

6 **Global coordination and collaboration between practitioners and policymakers is needed to increase learning and exchange, advance both theory and practice, and link individual initiatives to wider and more systemic global initiatives such as the SDGs.**

Annex A: Interviewees

TONY JENKINS

Tony Jenkins PhD has over 20 years of experience directing and designing peacebuilding and international educational programmes and projects in the fields of international development, peace studies and peace education. He is currently a lecturer in the programme on Justice and Peace Studies at Georgetown University. Since 2001, he has served as the Managing Director of the International Institute on Peace Education and since 2007 as the Coordinator of the Global Campaign for Peace Education. His applied research is focused on examining the impacts and effectiveness of peace education methods and pedagogies in nurturing personal, social and political change and transformation.

KEVIN KESTER

Kevin Kester is Assistant Professor of Comparative International Education and Peace/Development Studies in the Department of Education at Seoul National University. His research interests lie in the sociology and politics of education with a focus on the UN's education system; educational peacebuilding; peace and conflict studies; and social theory (de/postcolonial and postmodern thought, and critical pedagogy). He publishes frequently in international peer-reviewed journals, and his latest book is *The United Nations and higher education: Peacebuilding, social justice and global cooperation for the 21st century*.

MONISHA BAJAJ

Monisha Bajaj is an associate professor of international and multicultural education at the University of San Francisco. She is widely identified as the leader of Critical Peace Education. She is the editor of two seminal books in the field: *Peace education: International perspectives* and *Encyclopedia of peace education*.

HILARY CREMIN

Hilary is a Reader at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. Hilary is the Senior Advisor of the Cambridge Peace and Education Research Group. She researches and teaches in the areas of education and conflict and peace in schools and communities. Her latest book *Positive peace in schools* provides a new philosophy and a highly effective framework for building conflict literacy and a culture of peace in formal schools. Hilary focuses primarily on the UK context.

PHILL GITTINS

Phill Gittins PhD is World BEYOND War's Education Director. He has more than 15 years' programming, analysis and leadership experience in the areas of peace, education, and youth. He has particular expertise in context-specific approaches to peace programming; peacebuilding education; and youth inclusion in research and action.

RHIAN WEBB

Rhian Webb is a British Council Senior Teacher for Adults, with extensive experience in higher education and teacher training in conflict-affected contexts.

MARIA NOMIKOU

Maria Nomikou is a British Council staff member with extensive experience in education and teacher training in conflict-affected contexts.

Annex B: Case studies of peace education evaluation

The following case studies have been selected because of their relevance to the overall purpose of the project and to the main themes discussed in this literature review. All three case studies are of peace education programmes delivered in formal schools. The cases span three different contexts with various conflict dynamics: Bosnia and Herzegovina (post-conflict context), Jordan (refugees/conflict-affected context) and Afghanistan (context of protracted conflict). Our goal is not to provide detailed information on these peace education programmes, their evaluations or outcomes; these have been published and can be accessed elsewhere.[59] Rather, we aim provide a brief overview and to highlight some distinctive elements that might have contributed to the success and effectiveness of these programmes. These, we believe, might be helpful to endeavours to incorporate peace education in formal schools elsewhere.

A. EDUCATION FOR PEACE (EFP) IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Context
Bosnia and Herzegovina has a complex post-conflict educational system, which is mostly segregated, with an ethnically oriented curriculum that played a role in exacerbating conflicting narratives and in perpetuating divisions among the country's three main ethnic groups: Croats (mostly Catholics), Serbs (mostly Orthodox Christians) and Bosniaks (mostly Muslims).[60]

Overview of EfP programme
The EfP programme was introduced in the post-conflict Bosnian context in 2000 in three cities, Travnik, Sarajevo and Banja Luka. It was first implemented as a two-year pilot project in six schools, one primary and one secondary in each of the three aforementioned cities. Starting with these schools, which represented the diverse Bosnian population, EfP aimed to set the foundations for social cohesion. Six thousand students were involved, in addition to 400 teachers and thousands of parents. From 2003 to 2007, the programme experienced its first expansion phase when it was introduced to 100 new schools. Following its evident effectiveness, the programme garnered both local and international support and it expanded massively through two more stages. From 2007 to 2012, it was introduced to 1,000 more schools (primary and secondary) and to some pre-schools. In 2012, EfP was presented as a main part of education reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. All ministries of education, universities and pedagogical institutes have approved it to be fully integrated into all primary and secondary schools.

According to Danesh, the massive expansion of EfP has been accomplished mainly because of the uniqueness of the programme.[61] EfP had a systematic plan of action that adhered to the principles of peace as a way to foster a culture of peace, culture of healing and a culture of excellence within and among participating schools. It employed a whole-school approach and combined a set of main elements that defined both its conceptual formulation and application mythologies. The following table elaborates on its main elements.

59 H.B. Danesh, 2006, Op. cit., pp.55–78; H.B. Danesh, 2015, Op. cit., pp. 145–161; Generations for Peace Institute, 2015, Op. cit.; J. Corboz et al, 2019, Op. cit.

60 For more information on the Bosnian education system, see: W. Nelles, Bosnian education for security and peacebuilding?, International peacekeeping, 13(2), 2006, pp.229–241 and V. Perry, The permanent interim: Bosnia and Herzegovina's ongoing educational crisis, E-International Relations, 2014

61 H.B. Danesh, 2015, Op. cit., pp. 145–161

Elements of the EfP curriculum	
Integrative and inclusive	▶ The programme focused on integrating the universal principles of peace across all subjects. ▶ It aimed to engage all members of the school's community.
Universal and specific	▶ The universal element aimed to inform the school community that humanity is united and that this unity is expressed in diversity. The mission of humanity is thus to protect its diversity and enhance its oneness. ▶ With the specific element EfP attended to the specificity of each community and ensured the participation of their scholars and educators.
Peace-based framework	The EfP programme required that all subjects are to be studies from the perspective of peace instead of conflict.[62]
Peaceful/healing environment	The EfP programme involved the whole school community in learning how to create a culture of peace and a culture of healing.

Evaluation of EfP programme

Danesh explored different evaluations of the EfP programme and reported that the evaluations consisted of three main elements:[63] continuous internal evaluations conducted systematically by students, teachers and other members of staff; periodic evaluations completed by external experts; research projects. Drawing on Harris and Morrison, EfP decided on four dimensions as indicators of a successful peace education programme (the cognitive, the affective, the volitional and the behavioural) and it developed specific criteria to provide information about these four dimensions.[64] Apart from evaluations conducted throughout the pilot stage of the programme, three research projects have been conducted to assess the impact of EfP throughout its different expansion phases. These are the EfP longitudinal research project, the Most Significant Change research project, and the Columbia University research project. Data collection methods included questionnaires, interviews, and group discussions with students, teachers, administrators and parents, as well as evaluation of presentations by students during arranged peace events.[65]

Outcome and insights

Going into the details of the evaluation results is beyond the scope of this paper.[66] Important to the project in hand is that all different evaluations conducted over the course of 12 years provided compelling ample evidence that EfP has evident transformative properties and is a very effective peace-based education programme. According to Danesh, the success of EfP yields four prerequisite conditions for a peace-based education programme to be effective.[67] A truly effective peace-based education:

1 takes place in the context of a unity-based worldview;

2 takes place within the context of a culture of peace;

3 takes place within the context of a culture of healing; and

4 constitutes the framework for all educational activities and involves the whole school population and all areas of study throughout the year.

---

62 For example, when students begin to study Geography, the teacher helps them to fully comprehend the fact that the earth is fundamentally one environmentally and indivisible entity, and that division of the world into distinctive boundaries is arbitrary.

63 Ibid.

64 I.M. Harris and M.L. Morrison, 2003, Op. Cit.

65 These events are occasions in which the cognitive, the affective, the volitional and the behavioural aspects can be reviewed and evaluated (H.B. Danesh, 2015, Op. cit.).

66 For more information, see H.B. Danesh, 2015, Op. cit.

67 H.B. Danesh, 2006, Op. cit.; H.B. Danesh, 2015, Op. cit.

B. THE GENERATIONS FOR PEACE (GFP) JORDAN SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Context

Jordan is an upper middle-income Arab country, with a population of 10.5 million. It is one of the countries most affected by the Syrian crisis, hosting the second highest share of refugees per capita in the world.[68] Today, Syrians constitute over 10% of Jordan's population.[69] To accommodate the educational needs of school-age Syrians, the Jordanian education system has been over-stretched and the Jordanian Ministry of Education resorted to double school shifts with Jordanian students attending school in the morning and Syrians coming in the afternoon. Violent conflict in Jordanian schools[70] and visible prejudice against Syrian students have been frequently witnessed and reported. According to a report by Generations for Peace, these issues are triggered by a complex set of economic, political and social stressors[71] and are further exacerbated by the fact that many students and teachers lack basic skills for interpersonal communication and conflict management.[72]

Overview of GfP programme

Generations for Peace (GfP) is dedicated to sustainable conflict transformation at the grass roots. With its headquarters in Jordan, GfP works towards "sustainable peace in actively tolerant communities through responsible citizenship" in individuals and groups experiencing different forms of conflict and violence. It was ranked #26 in the 'Top 500 NGOs in the World' in 2020 by NGO Advisor, thus becoming the top-ranking NGO in the Arab World.

The GfP Jordan Schools Programme was first introduced as a pilot in four schools in Amman in 2013–14. Following its evident effectiveness,

it was decided that the programme will be implemented over two phases. During phase 1 (2014–15), it was delivered in eight schools; two in Amman, four in Irbid and two in Zarqa (one girls' school and one boys' school in each of Amman and Zarqa, and two boys' and two girls' schools in Irbid). In phase 2 (2015–16), the programme extended to a total of 12 schools. In this paper, we focus on the evaluation of the first phase delivered in 2014–15.

Phase 1 was conducted between December 2014 and May 2015. It started with training 40 teacher volunteers from the eight participating schools in Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid (five Jordanian teachers from each school). The training covered issues ranging from conflict transformation theory; facilitation in conflict contexts; conflict analysis; participatory monitoring and evaluation; volunteer mobilisation and management; and a peacebuilding toolkit of sport- and arts-based activities. Following the training, participating teachers and GfP staff selected 50 students from each school,[73] making the total number of participating students 400 in this first stage.

The programme organised sport, art, dialogue, and empowerment activities as an entry point towards integrated education and behavioural change. It utilised pedagogies including collaboration, participation and reflection to engage both Syrian and Jordanian youth. In essence, the programme sought to achieve three main outcomes: enhancing participating students' ability to address conflict without violence, improving the quality of interactions and relationships both among students and between students and teachers, and improving the academic achievement of participants. Seven indicators were developed to measure these three intended outcomes.[74]

---

68   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Fact sheet: Jordan, October 2019. For different reasons, not all Syrians are officially registered (B. Fallah, C. Krafft and J. Wahba, The impact of refugees on employment and wages in Jordan, Journal of Development Economics, 139, 2019, pp.203–216).

69   84% of them live in urban areas and 16% live in three refugee camps (UNHCR, 2019, Op. cit.).

70   Conflict in Jordanian schools takes many forms: physical violence (mostly in boys' schools), verbal violence (both boys and girls) and prejudice and discrimination.

71   E.g. education policies, economic pressures, gender discrimination, school infrastructure, and the impact of unhealthy family environments

72   Generations for Peace, 2015, Op. cit.

73   During selection, particular emphasis was made to achieve a balance of students with high and low academic achievement; high and low levels of social involvement with their peers; and (in schools with both Syrian and Jordanian students) Syrian and Jordanian nationalities.

74   For details of these indicators, see Generations for Peace, 2015, Op. cit.

Table 1: Key facts from GfP Jordan Schools Programme

Dates of participatory evaluations	9–29 August 2015
Generations for Peace pioneers/delegates attending	39
Representative sample of target group members attending	185
Representative sample of beneficiary community members attending	39
Representative sample of key stakeholders attending	31
Number of focus groups	48
Write-up and sharing dates	9–29 August 2015

Evaluation of GfP programme

Participatory evaluations were employed to evaluate the outcomes of phase 1. Evaluations were conducted in August and September 2015.[75] Input was collected from all stakeholders including volunteering teachers, participating students, beneficiaries' parents and members of the community, and other parties who supported the delivery of the programme (such as local partners who provided access to data from the Ministry of Education). Participatory evaluation comprised small focus group discussions where participants answered a predetermined set of questions, larger focus groups where members elaborated on their answers, and a 'write up and sharing' exercise where analysis of material collected at focus group discussions was conducted collectively. This allowed all the stakeholders to discuss what went well, the limitations of the programme and what could be improved in the next phase (see Table 1 for more details on the evaluation of the programme).

Outcome and insights

Evaluation results suggest a remarkable positive impact particularly in relation to the ability of students to respond to conflict non-violently and their capacity for positive interaction. Overall, it was found that the level of violence in schools was reduced, student-student and student-teacher relationships were improved, and the confidence and self-esteem of participants were enhanced.[76] However, there was a disagreement on the impact of the programme on educational achievement. In fact, results on this specific outcome expose one major limitation of the GfP programme; the sessions used to clash sometimes with an academic subject, causing participating students to miss – or at least arrive late – to some classes.

Of particular importance to this project is that the GfP programme speaks to the promising potential of formal-non-formal collaborative partnerships. In this case, GfP is a leading global non-profit peacebuilding organisation that worked closely with the Jordanian Ministry of Education. This partnership has clearly proved to be highly rewarding; however, the study also exposes some challenges and limitations that need to be factored in when considering such partnerships. Taking students out of their lessons to receive some forms of peace education is clearly problematic. It not only excludes other students but might also cause those who participate in such programmes to fall behind their peers in academic subjects.

The following case study of a peace education programme in Afghanistan provides another example of formal-non-formal partnership but where programmes are delivered outside official school time. Some other important elements are also unique.

---

75 It used a three-month pause before evaluation to test the permanence of the programme's effects.

76 For detailed results including a quantitative comparison of baseline and end-line data, and qualitative testimonies, see Generations for Peace, 2015, Op. cit.

C. HELP THE AFGHAN CHILDREN'S SCHOOL-BASED PEACE EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Context

Afghanistan is a country that has been wrestling with conflict, war and insecurity for the last four decades. Children in Afghanistan are exposed to multiple forms of violence, including at family and school levels.[77] Help the Afghan Children has been implementing peace education programming in schools and communities in Afghanistan since 2003. One of the first programmes to be subject to rigorous evaluation in Afghanistan was Help the Afghan Children's school-based programme that was complemented by community interventions.

Overview of the programme

The programme primarily aimed to reduce the use of violence against and between children, and to change harmful gender relations, norms and practices. It was introduced in two major phases: the first phase was in 2002 and phase two in 2011 (the results of which were then evaluated). This second phase was implemented in Jawzjan province over a period of two years. It included developing a peace education curriculum for grades seven to nine. The development and delivery of the curriculum was supported by the Afghan Ministry of Education. A team of international advisors developed the curriculum before it was reviewed and approved by the Ministry. The programme engaged with teachers, parents and other local community members and enrolled 2,000 boys and 1,500 girls from 20 schools. Ten corresponding communities were also the target of the programme's interventions.

Help the Afghan Children trained 50 teachers (27 female and 23 male) to facilitate the peace education curriculum, which was delivered either before or after official school hours. Students from grades seven and eight were the target of the first year and grades eight and nine in the second year. Over the two-year period, the curriculum consisted of 99 lessons (35 minutes each) covering multiple topics, including embracing the principles of peaceful everyday living, non-violent conflict resolution methods, tolerance, respect for women and girls, and rejecting violence.

The programme also implemented conflict resolution, peacebuilding and advocacy training with various local community actors, including parents and community and religious leaders.[78] Training sessions covered a variety of topics such as peacebuilding principles, mediation, and how the involvement of women in community affairs facilitates more prosperous communities. Other activities included building the capacity of representatives of women's CSOs[79] and staff from government departments, establishing peace committees across the communities, and radio messaging.

Evaluation of Help the Afghan Children's programme

The evaluation of the programme included three phases of data collection over 12 months.[80] Data was collected from 361 boys and 373 girls in 11 secondary schools (four boys' schools and seven girls' schools). Evaluation was conducted primarily through questionnaires and interviews with participating children. It mainly focused on children's experience of peer violence at school, corporal punishment both at school and at home, observation of domestic violence, depression and school performance. The questionnaires also focused on children's attitudes to gender equality and child punishment.

Outcome and insights

The evaluation of the intervention suggests that it has been very successful in achieving the aims of the programme. Results revealed remarkable reductions in different forms of violence at school and children's experiences of corporal punishment both at home and at school. At the end, both girls and boys showed less pro-violence attitudes. More specifically, there was an evident improvement in children's attitudes towards violence against women and their attitudes towards the physical punishment of children.

---

77   For more information, see UNICEF, Annual report: The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, UNICEF, 2014

78   A total of 1,507 mothers and 1,993 fathers (i.e. parents of students participating in peace education classes), and 150 religious and community leaders (30 female and 120 male), across the 10 communities participated in the training.

79   A total of 2,000 CSO representatives and government officials were trained in 80 training sessions that covered skills in non-violent conflict management, resolution and mediation, knowledge about women's constitutional rights and protections, and skills to support their meaningful participation in local civic affairs and community councils.

80   Baseline data collection was conducted in October and November 2016, midline data collection was conducted six months post-baseline (May 2017) and end-line data collection was conducted 12 months post-baseline (November 2017).

School girls on a field trip to the Jordan Museum in Amman, taking learning out of the classroom. © Matyas Rehak/Shutterstock

These findings suggest that the programme was an effective approach for reducing interpersonal violence and promoting peaceful and respectful conflict resolution among school-aged children. The findings also indicate that community-level activities have been successful in reducing violence at the household level. Both boys and girls reported experiencing significantly less corporal punishment at home and observing less domestic violence against women. Additionally, evaluation data reveals that students' psychosocial wellbeing also improved by the end of the intervention.

All in all, the Help the Afghan Children peace education programme offers an interesting example of a successful collaborative partnership between the formal and non-formal sectors to develop and deliver a school-based programme. Also, evaluation results suggest that including additional community-level components to a school-based peace education programme can yield very positive and promising outcomes.

Annex C: Key themes and guiding questions

The literature review generated some important questions and themes that required further analysis and interrogation. The bullet points below present some of the main questions that were explored in interviews with experts.

▶ **How can peacebuilding organisations and practitioners reconcile calls for critical approaches to peace education (for linking peace education programmes with social and global justice endeavours) with the evident actual need for peace education programmes similar to the currently popular but frequently critiqued ones (psychosocial people-centred approaches)? What can practitioners do to operationalise and advance these theoretical calls? What role can formal schools play in this?**

▶ **Peace education scholars frequently highlight the importance of promoting peace education programmes that are both contextualised and globally oriented (the local and global, the specific and the universal should exist in creative balance). What are the practical implications of this to the content of peace education programmes? What role can formal schools play?**

▶ **To what extent is it important to foster collaborative partnerships between formal and non-formal sectors? In what ways can non-formal peacebuilding actors and organisations seek to coordinate and collaborate with formal schools?**

▶ **Peace education projects tend to be different in conflict contexts (coexistence, different narratives) and contexts of relative peace (restorative practices, conflict resolution). To what extent is there is a need for global coordination?**