



Peace Education as the Way of Creating Future Generations: Where We are Now?

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ABSTRACT

According to global peace index 2022, global peacefulness gradually decreases over than last 10 years. The largest decadence was recorded in the political terror scale, neighbouring country relations, intensity of internal conflict, number of refugees and IDPs (internally displaced people) and political instability. Since current international system has not been changed since its renovation after the Second World War, there is a need of its innovation so as we can prevent the world from such conflicts. It is more than necessary to fill the gaps in international law in such a way that allows not only solve the upcoming conflicts through peaceful way such as dialogue, mediation, and peaceful means, but also ensure their complete cessation and prevention and build up sustainable peace through an implementation of a culture of peace. For this purpose, innovation of the educational system is being developed to prevent future generation from creating new conflicts. As one of the ways, this paper presents an example of HWPL Peace education strategy with its curriculum of 12 lessons. It aims to build up peace citizens who will naturally spread the culture of peace, choosing dialogue and peaceful solutions instead of conflict starting from everyday situations. Results from studies indicating the impact of peace education of young population in long-term is needed for proving its effects and opening wider and faster way for its implementation into a regular educational system all over the globe.

Keywords: Peace education, education, peace-building, United Nations, HWPL, peace messenger

Education is key to the development and future direction of generations, entire countries, and international relations. More broadly, it also affects the well-being, stability and prosperity of entire regions, countries and, by extension, between countries. It also contributes to whether or not different individuals, entire ethnicities, races and religions will live together in peace.

With the intention of creating a sustainable peace that is not “based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments” but “founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind”,¹ UNESCO was

created to give fresh impulse to education and spread the culture of peace after the Second World War.

This article summarizes the importance of peace education and role of educators in creating and preserving peace. It provides examples of education that seeks to improve the situation in a particular area or region, citing as examples. As one of the way to reach this goal, it presents the peace education curriculum of the international peace organization

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HWPL, which aims at understanding and recognizing the values of peace in the community and shows practical guidance on how to apply and practice the virtues needed to live in peace and harmony with other people.

Data base and methodology

The article uses both primary and secondary sources. Among the primary sources we can include the reactions of pupils and students of peace education and teachers as participants in training courses. It cites the Peace Education curriculum for high schools and universities as an example. It also provides the latest current peace education data in terms of the number of MOAs, MOUs or peace educators trained. It also uses primary documents such as the UNESCO Constitution or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Articles and publications dealing with the interconnectedness and effect of war on education and its impact on the welfare and running of the countries and global village were used as secondary sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Importance of Peace Education in the 21st century

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.

– Henry B. Adams

(A) Importance of teachers

It is no exaggeration to say that teaching is one of the oldest professions in the world. Teachers had an important role already in ancient, advanced civilizations such as Greece, Rome, Egypt or India and played an important role in the development of the entire country. They did not only have the function of imparting knowledge and information, but also greatly influenced the development of values and character of their students. Thus, teachers, forming the educational system as such, had a great influence on the formation of the abilities and character of the entire nation².

An education system which provides good conditions for the development of students at all levels, including critical thinking and free expression of opinion, and includes values promoting national unity, humanity, and peace, could contribute in a great way to the development of society and, by extension, the cultural revival of the entire nation. One of the good examples can be multicultural education that had an impact as a form of resistance towards oppression in United States³.

On the other hand, we would find many examples where it was through the education system that non-peaceful values were inculcated, often with the clear intention to discriminate or ostracize some group in society or encourage chauvinistic nationalism or even motivation for war. One of the many examples can be Japan before 1945, when as a “warfare” state, it led an expansionist policy towards its neighbors. (China, Korea, Russia). As a result of the inclusion of militarism in the educational curriculum, the connection with the media and the restriction of freedom of speech, the people of Japan believed that dying for one’s nation on the battlefield was the supreme virtue and the majority society of Japan supported their country’s war activities⁴.

However, even if the educational system is not keeping peace values, the initiation of change often came from the ranks of teachers. The national revivalists and reformers themselves were often teachers or professors at universities, which in history were often the source of ideas of national unity, language revival, the fight for the restoration or preservation of human rights and freedom. Among them we mention for example Adam Smith, Jan Amos Comenius, Maria Montessori, Ella Baker, or Martin Luther King Jr.

(B) Importance of restoration of peace

When In the last millennium we experienced two horrible tragedies of world wars “which have brought untold sorrow to mankind”, the world community decided to establish the United Nations – to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”⁵ However, despite the determination and efforts to preserve peace for generations to come,

we are currently experiencing a continuous increase in violence and war⁶.

Hand in hand with the importance of the renovation of international law and relations between states at the global level⁷, conflicts and wars must be prevented through the change of each individual. The Constitution of UNESCO declares that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”⁸

And one of the ways to achieve change on a large scale, across the board, permanently and in a targeted manner is through education.

(C) Importance of Peace Education

Since education and teachers has influence on ideas and values on the entire future generation, its goals, content, and quality are crucial for future well-being and peace starting from one family and community to whole country and in the bigger scale even of the world. Therefore, naturally, many educational trends have already emerged in the current era that aim for this.

2. Peace Education in the World

In recent years, education related to peace and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been gaining momentum worldwide. Some focuses on fostering a culture of peace through various approaches, such as teaching conflict resolution, human rights, nonviolence, intercultural understanding, and global citizenship or enters around the United Nations’ 17 SDGs, which aim to address various global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, and sustainable development. While there are general principles and themes that apply universally, such as human rights and sustainability, the specific implementation often considers the local context and challenges faced by a particular country or community.

One of the main is Global Citizenship Education (GCED) of United Nations. With its three visions, it focusses on creating a “good citizen”, who is personally responsible, participatory and social

justice-oriented. It fosters developing a sense of global awareness, empathy, and commitment to social justice by addressing the interconnectedness of the world and the importance of recognizing and showing global problems such as poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, human rights violations, and cultural diversity⁹.

UNESCO’s Education of Sustainable development (ESD) focus more on sustainability and environmental stewardship within local or regional contexts, covering similar scale of topics with special emphasis to SDGs.

At the same time, there are educations, that strive to make the world a better place in more concrete focus, e.g., Human Rights education, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Environmental Education, entrepreneurship education, Civic education or Indigenous education.

Last but not least, it is non-violent and peace education that focuses on creating a culture of peace, a set of values, behaviors and attitudes that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes through dialogue and negotiation between individuals, groups and nations¹⁰.

3. Core values of Peace Education HWPL, 12 lessons

Education that can be seen as encompassing, and supporting the previous guidelines is HWPL Peace Education. As a one initiatives of peace organization HWPL¹¹, marching towards goal to cease wars and create peace as a heritage of future generation.

With idea that peace starts from individual, Peace Education aims for raising children as a peace messengers - someone who loves life and naturally longs for peace, who first change to embody personalities of peace and then can naturally spread the culture of peace all around¹².

With structuralized 12 lessons of Peace Education Curriculum, it covers the main source of conflict first in ourselves, changing them into balance and enables each and every one to be someone who can prevent conflicts and when it comes, solve it in a peaceful way.

Part 1 (lesson 1-4) is called Understanding and Recognizing the Meaning and Values of Peace within the Community. It recognizes that all members of the community cannot live alone and must live in harmony with others. And it helps understand and create the conditions needed to maintain a harmonious society: realizing my own uniqueness, accepting diversity and realizing its strength and importance, human equality, understanding value of life, my value, my role and my influence. It analyses reasons of starting conflicts and breaking the order and showing the way how to restore the order in a human relationships and society while getting inspiration from order in nature.

Second part (lesson 5-12) carries a name, application and practice of virtues necessary for harmony with others. It shows concrete ways to live in harmony with everyone starting from my family or class to my community, city, state, to the international level. It also fosters the character that must be built to coexist peacefully with others and solve all problems peacefully. Through an awareness of gratitude, students learn to be considerate of others, to sacrifice some of what they have, to understand and forgive themselves and each other, to respect elders, teachers and everyone around them, and to preserve and develop the heritage of their ancestors, to uphold and develop the laws with the awareness of the importance of the law of peace, after understanding that to create peace I need to love, make the effort and have the courage and that it is I who have the power and responsibility to create peace.

A curriculum of such a range can overlap, support and complement already existing, more concretely profiled educations, such as human rights, gender, environmental education, global development education, non-violent communication, emotional education, etc. and connects them with the intention of creating a harmonious society, a world without wars, a world of peace.

4. Progress & results of Peace Education HWPL

The HWPL Peace Education Curriculum, is

part of the implementation of Article 10 of the DPCW, Spreading the Culture of Peace, which was composed in 2019, is spreading very quickly and has not been stopped even by the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Currently¹³, 15 MOAs (Memorandum of Agreement) were established with governmental education institutions in 12 countries. MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) have been concluded with 379 schools, universities, or educational institutions in 50 countries. And already 1,556 educators have completed the HWPL peace educator training and are delivering or starting to deliver in their peace education classes or projects.

Although a longer period is needed to change values and beliefs from conflict to peace, peace education has seen positive results in its implementation in areas where there is no war, non-stable areas or even in combat zones.

One good example is Mukhtar School, the first school in Afghanistan, where HWPL started Peace Education started despite the difficult educational and human rights situation already in 2020. The educational process began with 12 chapters of 3 lessons each, including history, politics, environment, and humanitarian personal experiences. Principal of Mukhtar School Mohammad Nadir Azedpana testified that he perceived a lot of changes after the implementation of Peace Education in Mukhtar school, especially in students' behavior – concretely students become more disciplined and pay attention, not only in academic, but also in a personal life¹⁴.

Twelve lessons of peace education are being used also in primary school teacher at Gymnasium school Ferdinand I. In Bucharest, Romania. Teacher, Aurora-Simona Spirescu has observed behavioral changes in her 6-7 year old students in just a few months: children were calmer, more respectful, empathetic and more attentive towards of each other, care about the place where they learn and play and wanted to help each other¹⁵.

Among the trainings of educators, a unique example of training of peace educators¹⁶ was the Erasmus+ project called We Are One: Harmony in Diversity hosted by Leisure Center in Ivančice, Czech Republic. Two intensive 7-day training

courses (December 2022, April 2023) and a home implementation phase involved educators from 9 countries and 20 nationalities. Through lectures, in-depth discussions, workshops, and creative activities such as drama, dance, singing, ceramics, painting, etc., they were able to deeply understand the first 4 lessons of HWPL's peace education. Now they are ready to implement values such as respect for diversity, cooperation, self-worth, influence, roles, order, etc. in their countries' in-school and out-of-school settings. After the program, Nepalese participant shared: "The project will have a long-lasting impact in our lives and our generation will create that sustainable and peaceful world that we all are longing towards. Děkuji!!"¹⁷.

FUTURE VISION

As we can see, there is a substantial need for peace education all over the Globe and despite differences in conflict issues, nationalities or environment, peace education is applicable to anyone without limitations and can be adjusted to the needs of given country. To prove its long-term effect in building up future generations with substantial reduced rate of violence and conflicts we need to collect data about progress of both (1) educators in the way of perceiving peace values and their ability to apply peace education in practice, and (2) pupils or students in the way of changing behavior towards each other, solving conflicts in non-violent way and creating a culture in society that will actively prevent conflict.

Negotiations are taking place at government level to sign MOAs with national education institutions, and at school and university level MOUs. Hundreds of teachers are currently studying Peace Education Teacher Training and incorporating the values into their classes. HWPL peace education textbooks for secondary schools and universities are already being distributed in each country, and a curriculum for young children is currently being developed to ensure coverage of all ages.

Through conferences, seminars of peace educators of the plan, connections and support are being made between distant parts of the world, as well as

cooperation between certain locations (e.g., Czech Republic and Ukraine)¹⁸.

Projects like Erasmus+ create a great opportunity to connect different nationalities and ethnicities at one peaceful place and help them to accept the diversity and find a way for future collaboration that can strengthen relationship between countries.

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CONCLUSION

The article describes the importance of peace education and the need to prepare conditions for its spreading all around the globe. Teachers and educators play a crucial role in spreading culture of peace among children and youth to create better future generations. Therefore, creating educational programs for teachers and educators that would fit to the needs of given country and also integrating lesson plans into a regular school teaching are the goals of peace organizations which tends to focus on within the scope of conflict prevention and maintenance of peace. In this article we described the work of HWPL as an example of an organisation that is working on fulfilment of this goal by its Peace Education initiatives. To achieve the goals, voluntary cooperation with schools and government officials on the application of teaching programs into practice is needed to obtain more objectively measurable results that prove the significant influence of peace education on the reduction of conflicts in society in long term. Such results can then support the widespread integration of peace education into the regular teaching of children of all ages and thus let it become legally binding culture of every country.

More data from currently running project are being collected so that we can gather results which can prove the impact of this education in a reduction of conflicts of young generation in the long term scale.

FOOT NOTES

1. UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); 16 November 1945, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ddb73094.html> [accessed 10 September 2023].
2. Lesson 9. Respect for Elders. Road to Peace. Seoul: Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light. 2021; p. 15.
3. For more see Sleeter, Christine E. Multicultural Education as a Form of Resistance to Oppression. *The Journal of Education*; 1989: 171(3): p. 51–71.
4. Ienaga, Saburo. The Glorification of War in Japanese Education. *International Security*; 1993: 18 (3): 113-133. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539207>.
5. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): Preamble. United Nations General Assembly. New York: United Nations General Assembly; 1948, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>
WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED
 - to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
 - to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
 - to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
 - to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom
6. According to global peace index 2022, global peacefulness gradually decreases last 10 years. The largest decadence was recorded in the political terror scale, neighbouring country relations, intensity of internal conflict, number of refugees and IDPs (internally displaced people) and political instability. See more at: Institute for Economics & Peace. *Global Peace Index 2022: Measuring Peace in a Complex World*, Sydney; June 2022, p. 8, available from: <http://visionofhumanity.org/resources> [accessed 12 June 2023].
7. One of the initiatives of HWPL is establish law of peace, through adoption DPCW (Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War) in UNGA as a resolution and its implementation into the state a national level. See more at: Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War. Seoul: Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light; 14 March 2016, available at: http://www.hwpl.kr/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/dpcw_en.pdf [accessed 13 June 2023].
8. UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); 16 November 1945, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ddb73094.html> [accessed 13 June 2023].
9. Westheimer, Joel. Can Education Transform Our World?: Global Citizenship Education and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. *Grading Goal Four: Tensions, Threats, and Opportunities in the Sustainable Development Goal on Quality Education*, edited by Antonia Wulff, Brill; 2020, p. 280–296.
10. More at: UNESCO's work on education for peace and non-violence: Building peace through education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); 2008, available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000160787> [accessed 14 June 2023].
11. HWPL (Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light) is international peace NGO, establish in 2013 by Korean war veteran and peace activist Man Hee Lee (*1933). HWPL is formally associated with the United Nations DGC and has special consultative status in ECOSOC and currently operates in 170 countries around the world. See more at: Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light [online]. available at: https://www.hwpl.kr/language/en/-hwpl-_en/ [accessed 14 June 2023].
12. Lesson 12. Completion of Peace Humanity Has Long-Awaited. *Peace Expedition*. Seoul: Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light; 2019: p. 17, 22.
13. Data from May 2023.
14. Azedpana, Mohammad Nadir. Peace education situation after the control of Taliban in Afghanistan. *HWPL Peace Education Journal*; February 2022 (1): p. 16-18.
15. Spirescuu, Aurora-Simona. HWPL Peace Education in Romania. *HWPL Peace Education Journal*; July 2022 (2): p. 6-8.
16. HWPL Peace education lessons are usually delivered to educators and youth workers, who then incorporate peace values into their lessons and projects.
17. For more information about ERASMUS+ project We Are One: Harmony in diversity including result reports, methodology and additional materials see Leisure center website: <https://www.svcivance.cz/projekty/erasmus/we-are-one-harmony-in-diversity/>
18. Ukraine-Czech cooperation project under the name of HWPL Youth Parliamentarians Conference: Ukraine-Czech Republic, was hold on 23rd May 2023 through platform zoom. Students were presenting own prepared speeches and discussing in groups on the topic connected with war prevention and resolution, role and limits of

international laws and importance of each individual to become peace messenger. HWPL Youth Peace Parliamentarians Conference (YPPC): Ukraine– Czech. 23rd May 2023, online, HWPL (Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light). International conference.

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