

## EFFECTS OF TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN PARTING PEACE EDUCATION AMONG YOUTH

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### **Introduction**

There have been numerous efforts towards the prevention of conflict, which undoubtedly destroys the existing peace. Over the past 45 years, important work has been done aimed at the promotion of peace.

Needless to say, the escalation of global conflict is rooted in diversity, which may be looked at in terms of economics, culture, politics, ethnicity, nationality, religion and gender among others. It is because of this diversity that there is a tendency for members of one group not to tolerate the views and actions of others. This leads to a fight for dominance, the result of which is conflict and the consequential breakdown of peace.

The solution to this kind of intolerance is educating people how to be peacemakers as well as peacekeepers. Through this focal point, therefore can we foster the promotion of tolerance.

### **Peace, Tolerance and Peace Education**

Peace is a broad concept with practical and spiritual connotations. It can imply a state of inner calm or end of conflict.

“Peace is what you think it is (or want it to be)”. Peace has been understood to mean the absence of conflict or violence and conversely as the presence of states of mind and of society such as harmony, accord, security and understanding. Webster defines peace as, “a state of quiet or tranquility; freedom from disturbance or agitation, calm repose”. From the above definitions it can be agreed that in the absence of elements such as tolerance, understanding, empathy, cooperation and respect for the difference in others, there cannot be peace. Thus in order to understand better how to achieve peace on a global level marked by the absence of violent conflicts or wars between nations, states and communities, it is important for us to examine what personal attitudes, values and knowledge provide the basis for working towards peace making. While most people prefer to live and work in peaceful situations, few have examined situations in order to identify the elements that foster peaceful learning living and harmony and whether it is possible to have global peace if we do not reflect personally on how peace is achieved in our daily lives<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Allen, Lydia, Chantal LaParl-Green, Mana Miyakawi, Nelson Monroe, Siri Siripanich & Brandon Thompson (eds.) 2009. *Peace Education Programme Evaluation*. Columbia: School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). [www.ineesite.org/uploads/documents/store/SIPA\\_PEP\\_Report\\_2009.Pdf](http://www.ineesite.org/uploads/documents/store/SIPA_PEP_Report_2009.Pdf)

**Tolerance**

Tolerance is the main keys to building and maintaining civil society. It gains particular importance in the present day world filled with diversity in populations that has led to conflict at difference levels. A tolerant society must be one in which diverse groups created by marks of affiliation and cohesion may maintain their identities while at the same time sharing in the larger natural or regional unity.

Tolerance has been defined as “the capacity for a practice of recognizing and respecting beliefs of practices of others” (American Heritage Dictionary; 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition; 1992). Thus, tolerance can be viewed from a personal and social level. Acts of intolerance may however pass unnoticed except through self re-examination where one’s values and prejudices may be isolated. Government efforts at legislation for the protection of rights of individuals and groups may go along way to foster tolerance in a diverse society.

The continued breakdown of peaceful relations through ethnic violence, religions, tensions, economic superiority and the desire to become superpowers calls for an integrated approach to the issue of diversity.

**Peace Education**

Peace education is an essential component of quality basic education. It is concerned with helping learners to develop an awareness of the process and skills that are necessary for achieving understanding, tolerance and goodwill in the world today.

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**Education for Peace Means**

Examining and discussing our values and attitudes towards diversity, cultural differences, tolerance and human dignity and directing our efforts towards achieving fundamental changes within societies.

Developing language and social interaction skills to promote peaceful relations among people, among nations and between human beings and the natural environment.

Learning to solve problems and to think critically regarding issues of conflict and violence.

Peace education should be a participatory process which aims at changing society’s way of thinking and which promotes learning of peace. Education should be put on issues that may lead to conflict well such as gender studies, speaking the language of non-violence and creation of proper international relations.

**The Need for Peace Education**

Humanity faces challenges of unprecedented proportions such as the continued development of weapons of mass destruction, conflicts between states and ethnic groups,

the spread of racism, community violence, the huge widening gap between the rich and the poor throughout the globalised economy, massive violation of human rights and the degradation of the environment. These issues are a stumbling block to the attainment of world order.

In order to tackle these complex and interwoven problems, there is need to make the preventive measures and solutions to these problems deeply routed in the minds of the populations. This justifies the need for peace education, which should focus on human security and how to live in a world infested with diversity<sup>2</sup>.

Besides, the fact that what culminate into global conflicts originate at community level in a particular nation and the subsequent appeal to the notion of state sovereignty especially where the conflict involves the military, has posed great problems.

The UN charter I Article 2(iii) contains the clause on state sovereignty, which restricts the situation in which domestic affairs of a nation can be questioned. The campaigns for peace education at community level can therefore better serve as an ultimate solution where international intervention cannot be a reality. This is because the methodology of peace education encourages critical thinking and prepares learners to act on their convictions. Thus the main reason for educating for peace and the following:

#### **To Make Learners aware of the Basis of Conflict in their Daily Lives**

To use classroom as a microcosm of a just world order, in which the global values of positive inter dependence, social justice and participation in decision making processes are learned and practiced; and

To prepare students to become good citizens with skills to promote peace and human dignity at all levels of interaction.

Network for Peace-Building Initiatives (NPI)'s focus for peace education has two goals first:

To build public awareness and political support for introduction of peace education into all spheres of education including non-formal education, in all schools throughout the country,

To promote the education of all teachers, civic leaders and partners to teach and advocate for peace.

We need peace education for ourselves, our relationship with other human beings to promote respect for oneself and respect for others on individual level as a prerequisite for the prevention of violence and conflict at society level and to raise people's consciousness about their rights whilst promoting international understanding between the people of different worlds.

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<sup>2</sup> Bauer, Joachim 2012. *Aggression und Friedenskompetenz aus Sicht der Hirnforschung*, in: *Pädagogik*, 64, 11, 11-14.

Also NPI believes, peace education helps increase people's awareness about the mechanisms that enhance a culture of peace and helps to empower and strengthen people's rights as well as promote their confidence.

It should be remembered that, social phenomenon are made up of interconnected elements and can be defined in two ways;

The fusion of human beings with the environment in which they are brought up- the process by which societies take form.

The individuals' comprehension is shaped by group comprehension thus the adult becomes the child of society.

Peace education should thus seek to transmit such relevant information and other methods of peaceful conflict resolutions, training and non violent means of setting differences in the family, at school or the work place and in other common place settings, thus creating a commitment to similar behavior on a larger national and international level and this underpins NPI's peace education philosophy.

#### **Fostering Peace Education**

Implementing peace education can be achieved in the following ways:

Using topics that raise issues related to peace and cultural understanding in our classrooms. This helps teachers to accord students the basic information to help them develop positive attitudes and values related to peaceful living; and

Engaging in activities that encourage cooperation, consensus building and reflective listening gives students skills they need to meet and resolve conflicts

NPI believes confronting issues and problems related to the topics related to conflicts will undoubtedly provide opportunities for pupils and students to develop conflict solving and critical thinking skills alongside language skills to express themselves clearly and convincingly. At the center point of all this, is the desire to make learners negate their inbuilt biases against other groups.

#### **Peace Education as a key to Tolerance**

NPI believes in the promotion of tolerance through peace education, the following themes serve as important guidelines.

#### **Conflict Analysis**

Analyzing conflict involves examining the situations for the causes of conflict or misunderstanding. Through this, pupils, students and communities can develop a vocabulary that is needed to discuss the concept of peace and conflict and to deepen their understanding of these issues. As they explore the concepts of peace, they discuss their own attitudes and values; they improve their social interaction skills as well as their language skills.

Conflict, it is agreed, is a negative force that we should try to resolve in order to achieve more positive states such as harmony, understanding and peace in our lives. Nevertheless, conflict exists at all levels of social interaction, from personal inner conflict to global wars and international violence. We cannot avoid conflict but we can find ways to deal with it that will reduce its impact on our lives and even exploit positive effects related to conflict situations. For example, examining a situation and our response to it. If positive it may allow for more peaceful living and tolerance.

Clarifying the elements within a situation that are sources of conflict is an important first step in resolving the conflict. The most common categories of conflict are those of resources, needs and values or goals the issues that initiate conflict are the basic of community, national and international conflicts that do often escalate to wars. Because of each groups desire to have dominance over certain resources or to project its social, political or cultural groups, the temptation not to tolerate those that do not ascribe to their desires is so often great. Thus through peace education, NPI hopes to achieve means by which groups with divergent aspirations may live together<sup>3</sup>.

### **Conflict Resolutions**

Because conflict is a natural part of our daily lives and thus unavoidable, when viewed in a positive light, it allows us to examine the status quo and engage in creative problem solving. We can use conflict situation to grow personally and to become more reflective. In addition, conflict situations creatively handled allow us to effect personal organizational and societal change. The world needs more people with peace making skills.

The beneficiaries of peace education should be the ones able to examine conflict situations for better understanding, practice conflict resolution techniques and be better prepared to be effective peacemakers.

Therefore, the theme of conflict resolution in peace education presents the opportunity to acquire peace-making skills for dealing with conflict in our personal lives and make us aware of the processes of peace making at national and international levels.

NPI believes that the necessary skills for the smooth management of conflict are analysis (determining conflict), idealation (developing alternative solutions), strategy, (gaining a working knowledge of conflict resolution techniques and risk taking). Conflict resolution should through peace education be geared towards the de-escalation of the conflict using appropriate methods.

### **Speaking the language of Non-Violence**

The language of non-violence involves developing effective communication skills in order to carry out positive interactions in everyday social situations as well as conflict

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<sup>3</sup> Carlsson, Karin Utas 1999. *Violence Prevention and Conflict Resolution. A Study of Peace Education in Grades 4-6. Malmö: Department of Educational and Psychological Research, Malmö School of Education.*

situations. It involves an understanding of pro-social behavior such as cooperation, collaboration, affirming others and expressing feelings clearly in such a way that do not accuse others in other words, speaking the language of peace.

At the student level, experiences in cooperative learning, conflict resolution, structured controversy and mediation will be identified as the of any comprehensive effort to create peace. The following list is a selection of the most common pro-social behaviors and common skills that have been identified by peace educators for instruction and practice and which NPI intends to further study and design to suit local situations by incorporating social-cultural requirements.

### **Speaking for Purpose**

#### **Listening Attentively and Reflectively**

- Promoting self-esteem, dignity for oneself and respect for feelings and rights of others.
- Speaking about oneself instead of the other person
- Speaking with positive emotional expressions
- Understanding possible barriers to effective communication and how to diffuse them.

Teaching the language to students at a personal level is intended to equip them with skills that they can use to cross barriers of ethnicity, nationality, religion and other in-built prejudices.

### **Cross Cultural Understanding**

Developing cross-cultural understanding provides knowledge necessary to enhance awareness of cultural patterns among different cultures.

Network for Peace -Building Initiatives (NPI) understands that being aware of the disparities that exist between cultures and knowing how to act when faced with puzzling cross-cultural differences are important skills for harmonious intercultural relations. Research shows that we can examine all cultures by using a basic taxonomy of cultural behavior, which allows us to see the difference, and similarities that exist between cultures.

Culture, in which each of us lives influences and shapes on feelings, attitudes and responses to our experiences and interaction with others. Because of the culture, each of us has knowledge, beliefs, values, views and behavior that we share with others who have the same cultural heritage. These past experiences handed down from generation to generation influence our values of what is attractive and what is not, what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. Because each culture has a unique way of approaching these

situations, we find great diversity therefore this will provide students with knowledge and skills for more effective communication in inter cultural situations<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, the knowledge of cultural differences and self knowledge of how we usually respond to those differences can make us aware of hidden prejudices and stereo types that are barriers to tolerance, understanding and good communication.

### **Developing Empathy**

Empathy has been defined as “the mental identification of the ego with the character and experiences of another” Emphatic communication connotes extending oneself into another person’s space in order to see things from the viewpoint of that person. In cross-cultural situations, empathy would require adjusting to the cultural as well as individual identities of others. Students can undertake awareness of empathy and to use language skills to send appropriate messages that communicate shared understanding of others through role taking tasks.

Unlike sympathy, which carries the connotation of pity, and sufferer, the supporter social roles empathy assumes the equality between two people or groups from different cultural backgrounds. Practicing empathy is a psychologically and emotionally demanding interpersonal skill but one that is necessary for effective communication.

### **Approaches to Peace Education**

World over, the peace education field is still evolving and many of the programmes incorporate negative and positive peace components mixing for example discussions about values and rights connected to peace with the identification of factors that can lead to violence. Many educationists emphasize the need to bolster optimism and empowerment in children. In too many cases, children’s hopes and fears are put at a severe discount with a failure to address their concerns responsibly and in empowering ways. A central aim of NPI is to foster learning environments likely to enhance outcomes that actually benefit young people and empower them to change their situations. Implicit in this is that, should this occur, young people would steer.

Peace education can be taught as an explicit course or by use of modules such as a peace education package or by infusion into existing courses to create dimensions across the curriculum thus incorporating skills (empathy, cooperation) and attitudes (a commitment to justice, respect for others and oneself) with knowledge (about conflict, peace and power). Some educators have noted that the pedagogical approaches of teachers do not promote values relating to peace and non-violence. Authoritarian instruction is a form of domination moreover, teaching about ‘how they’ think and act not how ‘i’ think

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<sup>4</sup> Harris, Ian 2010. *History of Peace Education*, in: Gavriel Salomon & Ed Cairns (eds.). *Handbook on Peace Education*. New York: Psychology Press, 11-20

and act... denigrates the students' own lives and experiences. It is on this pretext that NPI is bent on an a combination of all inclusive peace education programmes<sup>5</sup>

Peace education as a formal subject must be said has arisen primarily in the western world and the developing world is in pursuit. This hardly means that peace education was cultivated only in the west, but it does mean that the mainstream peace education field has cultivated assumptions that are grounded in western traditions, examples being, peace education approaches centering on school children and yet in poor African (Ugandan) settings, children drop out of school often in the early formal education process. Further, classrooms may not be as authoritarian as work environments that dropouts face. Teachers who are the very heart of the education process are poorly trained and remunerated and the resources poor countries like Uganda combined to the already limited opportunists make it practically impossible or increasingly difficult.

In Uganda, like in many African countries examination results are used to gauge educational quality hence any expansion of subjects (to include peace education), revision of existing curricula (to instill peace education themes, values and concepts into existing subjects) or reforms in pedagogy (to change the way of teaching) might not only call for increased investment levels that are unattainable and unavailable but directly conflict with existing educational priorities. Decreasing classroom periods reserved for exam subjects even though in the cause of peace education could cause some educators, students and some sections of parents considerable concern.

NPI policy is to carry out strategic research and needs assessments to support best choice of strategy to be applied. This is in view of some selected peace education programmes already in place in many areas around the world supported by our peace partners, taking many different forms in the humanitarian and development worlds. Lessons from the UNESCO trans disciplinary project for a culture of peace and adopted by the UN General Assembly (13<sup>th</sup> September 1999), UNICEF's peace education programme, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), UNHCR peace education and Youth peace training manual developed by ALL Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Education for All (EFA) Dakar Framework of Action among others.<sup>6</sup>

### **Peace Education within Schools**

NPI's focus on school based instruction of peace programmes inclines on activities geared to changing school environment towards production of peace materials, empowering

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<sup>5</sup> Davies, Lynn 2013. *Education, Change and Peacebuilding. FriEnt Essay 1/2013. Bonn: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Frieden und Entwicklung. [www.frient.de/nc/publikationen/dokumente/library/educationchange-and-peacebuilding.html](http://www.frient.de/nc/publikationen/dokumente/library/educationchange-and-peacebuilding.html).*

<sup>6</sup> Maoz, Ifat 2010. *Education for Peace through Planned Encounters between Jews and Arabs in Israel: A Reappraisal of Effectiveness*, in: Gavriel Salomon & Edward Cairns (eds.). *Handbook on Peace Education*. New York: Psychology Press, 303-315.



teaching staff, curriculum change and carrying out all the necessary peace education research to determine the best way forward.

NPI aim is make peace education most effective through researching, designing, modeling and developing of peace and promotion of community participation for peace programmes. Through its advocacy arm it intends to improve the learning environment to a microcosm of the more peaceful and just society. The consistency between the curriculum, personnel and education setting is paramount to education for peace. Training of trainers, administrators and communities is vital.

Evaluation of peace manuals developed in other countries on themes like communication, cooperation and problem solving will be studied and if possible tailored to local circumstances with the fully researched data suiting the different settings in the country. The UNICEF, "Children working for Peace" pack of teaching materials will be one of the examples employed.

NPI intends to further document various stories, poems on peace themes through the use of drama, sport and physical education for advancement of peace skills and attitudes. Promotion of community service facilitated by schools could be used to build corporation between schools and societies. Teacher education in peace matters will be carried with the help of volunteers, development workers and other personnel relevant to NPI cause.

Peace articles of schools are vital for continuing and re-emphasizes the agenda for peace. NPI will carry out workshops, seminars, youth camps, recreational activities, youth clubs and groups to advance the theme of peace. Workshops for parent, community leaders, media training, voice of the young, use of traveling theatre as well as production of peace newsletter will be vital for out of school dissemination of peace facts.

NPI further intends to intensify promotion of peace education out of school by use of banners, car stickers and posters in vital and strategic places like bars, health and trading centers as well as use of bill board publicity. Peace campaigns, international peace day celebrations, contests and exhibitions as well as increase peace components in the traditional cultural programmes.