Teaching Peace amidst Conflict and Postcolonialism

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Edited by

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and Maria Paula Unigarro Alba

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Edited by Christopher P. Davey, Cris Toffolo and Maria Paula Unigarro Alba

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This book is dedicated to those who make peace possible
in troubled times.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is rooted in the collaborative vision of the team at Education for Global Peace (EGP), including Juan Felipe Carrillo Gáfaro, Christopher P. Davey, Gal Kleinman, Michael Minch, Cris Toffolo, and Maria Paula Unigarro Alba. It emerged out of our ongoing work in EGP's mission of bringing about cultures of peace. The contributing authors of this book brought this project to life, and it therefore represents their varied practitioner and scholarly dedications to peace education. This book came together during and following a global pandemic. The impacts of such are felt in many of the chapters, showing the adaptive nature of peace education in troubled times. We hope the results of this research continue to nurture the field of peace education by informing educators, practitioners, and decision-makers on how to better foster cultures of peace.

INTRODUCTION

TEACHING IN TROUBLED TIMES

CHRISTOPHER P. DAVEY

Introduction: The world's most urgent problems

Speaking in his inaugural lecture as the University of Bradford's Peace Studies chair in 1975, Adam Curle outlined a program for peace education. He advocated a threefold approach: a systemic study of past and present human relations, use of practice-based analysis, and a model of education applicable to the "world's most urgent problems". He added that "we are entering a very troubled period of the world's history, not necessarily one of major wars but of confusion and change, and that roles which we can hardly envisage at the moment may open up for students of peace studies who have both the skill and the motivation to try to alter things a little bit for the better."[1] Prophetically, Curle identifies the struggle of peacebuilding and peace educators today. In a world where post-conflict and postcolonial countries struggle to heal from the past and meet new challenges, peace education is often neglected and instrumentalized for political agendas. An effective program of peace education responds to these dynamics, meeting our urgent problems and opening up new opportunities for peacebuilding.

With this direction in mind, our book addresses practices of peace education from around the world. Many of the authors reflect on this premise in how countries *educate for peace*. Their perspectives consider the complexities of what kind of positive or negative peace is being educated, and the agendas of peace education in each context. These inflections of peace and education highlight the fraught nature of this inquiry.

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[1] Adam Curle, *Education for Liberation* (Tavistock, 1973), 113, 116. See the full text of this inaugural event here: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED293732.pdf.

The fundamental question answered by this collection is can peace be taught where the scars of war and legacies of colonialism are entrenched in society? All human institutions and lifeways are learned, including practices of cultural, structural, and direct violence. Notwithstanding the magnitude and history of violence, peace and peacebuilding are learned and can be relearned. Peace education is foundational to a more equitable future where global citizens share a planet with justice, equity, human security, and all the elements of sustainable, resilient peace. Foremost, peace education is an essential pillar for societies scarred by violence.

What is peace education?

Peace education is the concerted effort to teach principles of peacebuilding, including but not limited to conflict transformation, critical understandings of violence, cooperation over competition, human rights, conflict analysis, respect, dignity, decoloniality, harmony with nature and natural resources, participatory democracy, human security, and justice. Peace practitioners and scholars often distinguish between negative and positive peace, where the former is a cessation of violence and the latter is a transformation of relationships. Peace education, at its best, seeks a more dynamic, positive kind of peace. This book addresses these aspects and their implementation through ten country-based case studies.

This field of practice and study has a deep heritage. As addressed by several of our authors, peace thinking has significant indigenous cultural and spiritual roots. The intersection of conflict and colonialism across these traditions serve as testing grounds and places of adaptation for conceptions of peace. The post-World War Two era of decolonial struggles provides a special elevation for peace education. Foremostly articulated by Paulo Freire in his seminal 1970 book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is the special standing of colonized peoples and the victims of war to articulate and design peace education. Connecting to Curle's approach and grounding it in relational practice, Freire claims a dyadic center of dialogue and critical thinking, producing "generative" capacities to unfold possibilities for peace.[2] Simply put, what is taught about peace needs to be founded in practices of peace, and produce future peace. Given these roots, peace education as a field of study and practice is still taking shape. It is pulled in various directions, as demonstrated by our authors,

[2] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014). 97-103. Read these principles in action through Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Theatre Communications Groups, 1985).

towards political agendas, varying styles of conflict response (management, reconciliation, transformation), civics, human rights, multiculturalism, and social justice.[3] The intention of this book and future publications associated with Education for Global Peace is to critically understand peace education in its existing contexts, particularly within the broader critique of liberal peace.[4] We aim to provide a range of practitioners, researchers, and educators with differently rich perspectives and recommendations.

Who we are: Education for Global Peace

The research contained in the following chapters comes together as a result of ongoing research and collaboration between experts led by Education for Global Peace (EGP).[5] EGP is building a global network and movement that seeks to bring about a world based on cultures of peace. Following the belief that the foundation of peacebuilding is peace education, EGP is committed to developing projects and strategies on peace education at different levels and across a diversity of human experiences.

We envision a world where nonviolence, justice, and peace characterize our everyday interpersonal relationships, communities, cultures, societies, and states.[6] Our mission therefore is to foster a global transformation in which peace education empowers children, youth, and adults in a variety of educational settings, so that they can possess the knowledge, skills, capabilities, and attitudes to build peace in the world around them. EGP was founded by the son of a holocaust survivor, Gal Kleinman, in 2013. Gal lives in Israel and has witnessed the tragedies of war firsthand. He came to realize that all of us, including our 'enemies', are born into a certain social background, a swirl of forces and systems that makes us who we are, including our identities, values, beliefs, and behaviors. And further, that the key to a peaceful world is educating for peace. EGP has its roots in the coming together of people from all walks

[3] Michalinos Zembylas, Constadina Charalambous and Panayiota Charalambous, *Peace Education in a Conflict Affected-Society* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 1-18.
[4] Oliver Richmond and Roger Mac Ginty, "Where now for the critique of the liberal peace?" *Cooperation and Conflict* 50, no. 2 (2015): 171-189.
[5] Read more about us here: www.educationforglobalpeace.org, last updated 2022.
[6] Roger Mac Ginty, *Everyday Peace: How So-Called Ordinary People Can Disrupt Violent Conflict* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

of life and many different countries who work for peace and facilitate the (r)evolution of peace education from the local to the global.

Amidst Conflict and Postcolonialism

Given this outlook, it is crucial that this collection addresses places where peace education is most needed, which in some instances are also in the forefront of nonviolent disruption of oppression and harm: amidst conflict and postcolonialism. A myriad of global issues clamor for an approach grounded in the principles of peace education: gender inequity, climate change, decolonization, police violence, public health crises, persistent/resurgent authoritarianism, faltering democracy, and aggressive resource extraction. Why then focus on post-conflict and postcolonial states? These two distinct, often overlapping realities present spaces where a variety of actors persist together to create peace through peace education. The distinct, overlapping sites of post-conflict and postcolonialism evidence an urgency for peace education as well as a view into the practices, policies, and politics at this intersection.

We recognize that the violence experienced in these environments is multi-dimensional/directional. Conflict, being the direct violence between parties often ignites flares of cultural and structural violence. Furthermore, cultural and structural violence can, in turn, lead to direct violence.[7] In this book conflict is understood not only as active, but as a residual and long-term condition of post-conflict states. Post-conflict is used as a label to identify countries with conflict in their past, not limiting the fact that conflict is resurgent in some of our cases. Indeed, this is often an endemic problem in post-conflict countries: violence is never too far away, and societies require continual, active peacebuilding. Postcolonial states have embedded practices and policies of cultural and structural violence, often leading to direct violence and active conflicts.[8] The ten case studies in this book are touched by one or both of these social phenomena. As such, they are essential places from which to ask whether peace can be taught. Our authors show that despite the challenges in such contexts the answer is a resounding, yes! Peace can and must be taught to drive the social transformation of post-conflict and postcolonial states.

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[7] Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167-191; Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291-305.

[8] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (University of California Press, 2001).

Our cases represent an array of post-conflict and/or postcolonial sites. The strictly postcolonial case is New Zealand, with the post-conflict cases being Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Uruguay.[9] The overlapping cases, where both scenarios are present include: Afghanistan, Bolivia, Burundi, Colombia, Myanmar, and Northern Ireland. Classification of these cases in this way might appear to be a bit strange however it is based on the authors' approaches and emphases on the post-conflict and postcolonial dynamics in the individual discussions of peace education, and as such it will become clear in the course of reading each chapter.

Given the focus on peace education amidst conflict and postcolonialism, there are several broader core issues addressed throughout. *Who are the societal actors involved in shaping peace education?* Our authors discuss the connections between education ministries, civil society groups, international donors, and other non-state actors. *How is peace defined and part of political life?* Peace curriculums are a result of these competing interests and power relations. The political battles that ensue between superficial or negative peace education and positive peace education are seen across many of the cases. Driving the original thinking behind this project was the problematic or even weaponization in extreme cases of peace education to the purposes of leading political and cultural elites. *To what extent is positive peace mobilized for change?* The differences between general conflict resolution skills and respect in society, versus more transformative, engaging approaches to positive peace education are apparent across our cases.

Organization of the book

The strength of this collection lies in our authors' recommendations. These come from a diversity of contexts and from the lived experience of violence and practice in peacebuilding. The book orders authors' contributions alphabetically by country.[10] The following descriptions summarize each chapter's focus on peace education in their country context.

Afghanistan is a country that is no stranger to the violence of conflict and colonialism. The authors of this chapter, Hogai Aryoubi, Seyed Ali

[9] These three countries are also postcolonial sites; however, the presence of this factor is less pronounced in these authors' analysis.

[10] See the Note on Contributors section at the end of the book for short biographies of the editors and authors. Authors assessing South America expressed preferences for this term as well as Latin America, and both are used interchangeably in this book.

Hosseini, and Attaullah Wahidyar seek to understand peace education through the chaos this state has witnessed in recent decades. They see peace education from a context heavily influenced and materially invested by non-state actors. Peace education practices are traced through periods of transition and turmoil, particularly in the gendered aspect of who gets education and who does not. Various state and non-state actors have attempted, since 2001 to shape a counter-culture in education, as a bulwark against Taliban madrassas. Consequently, girls' access to education increased seven-fold between 2001 and 2011. This resulted in competing models of peace education. Curriculum has ranged from life skills in respect and values, to peaceful game playing, and conflict resolution. Each model taps into Islamic thought on peace and community. Most of these initiatives exist through the sustained support of international organizations like UNESCO. The ever-present threat of violence endangers the gains made and increases the likelihood of barriers, such as poverty, blocking future developments. The authors offer a cautioning conclusive point about the bleak future of peace education under the Taliban.

Phill Gittins and Andreas Riemann identify the potential and limits of classroom-only approaches to Bolivian peace education. They highlight here an under-examined case study in the larger peace education literature, and bring to the forefront the need to develop broader peace education practices, beyond the formal schooling sector. In a country where decolonization and peacebuilding have featured in recent policy, this environment has become a political battleground against former President Morales' reforms. Long periods of fieldwork in Bolivia by both authors, uncover an evaluation of peace education and inclusion of indigenous notions of peace into society and the classroom. Based on this rigorous background of in-country work, Gittins and Riemann recommend developing Bolivian peace education through investment, broader inclusion, and improved partnership between government, civil society, and other organizations.

Peace education in Burundi offers young people in this conflict-ridden state a pathway out of the "normal" opportunities to participate in violence. In this chapter, Kara Hooser reviews the embattled position of indirect peace education in a repressive state hostile to civil society. These efforts have found more fertile ground working beyond government ministries. Hooser observes how peace education in Burundi at present focuses more on indirect models, of building capacity and knowledge rather than directly instructing about peace. Teachers themselves, as both actors who are surviving violence, and agents of peace education, are of

particular interest in this assessment. The latter includes generalized themes like tolerance, empathy, critical thinking, as well as skills in reconciliation. It is argued that the conceptualization of difference is essential for peace education to deal with the past and create broader political space in the present. Overall Hooser highlights the risks of avoiding critical, direct peace education.

Juan Felipe Carrillo Gáfaro, Tatiana Mosquera Angulo, and Maria Paula Unigarro Alba assess changes in post-war Colombia peace education through a review of the achievements of the Chair of Peace in advancing new pedagogy and the framework developed for implementing peace education across primary and secondary educational institutions. They give an account of 60 years of conflict in Colombia including motivations, causes, violence, and negotiations. The authors' fieldwork engages with stakeholders who are involved with the Chair of Peace's legislation, implementation, and practice on the local level. This measure was intended to enable the transition from conflict to post-conflict down to a broader level of social cohesion. Civil society and experienced peace educators were able to mobilize this approach to craft a holistic concept of peace in public education curricula. Yet, war-time divisions and lack of ministerial support hampered the Chair of Peace, with success being limited to mediation training in schools and memory debates.

Donna-Marie Fry addresses peace education in Myanmar under an embattled authoritarian regime, and the promise and challenge of peace education through a political nexus of religion, ethnicity, education, and violence. The ongoing conflict around Rohingya expulsion and counterinsurgency is one of many obstacles on the road to educating for peace. Fry moves from colonial legacies to oscillations around democracy, all impacting attempts at peace education, itself a casualty of politicized educational reform in recent years. This diverse country faces a struggle to find the right place for Buddhist political nationalism which is often a powerful force shaping education policy, and has direct engagement with peace education.

Peace education in Nepal emerged relatively recently in the post-conflict context of Maoist insurgency, with the Ministry of Peace taking a leading role in promoting a participatory approach. In this chapter, Rajib Timalsina offers an assessment of various elements of peace education, not yet widely understood by scholars or practitioners. Timalsina provides a multifaceted introduction through a review of transitional justice initiatives, the role of young people, efforts at dealing with gender-based violence, growth of the diaspora seeking employment, and the challenging nature of Nepalese geography which limits access to resources. Based on

fieldwork, this chapter analyzes the mainstreaming of peace education. Timalsina uses critical curriculum analysis to catalog the actors and educational programs. Hindu foundations of spiritual holism and wellbeing are addressed as under-researched influences. University-based peace education and a softer presence in secondary schools under civics and security forces training in human rights are documented as evidence of a society-wide effort to promote peace education.

In a country not beset by conflict, but dealing with the legacies and realities of (de)colonization, Georgia Jackson takes stock of New Zealand's approach. Driving the latter is a values and causes of conflict focus, which also considers the perspectives of indigenous groups. The chapter progresses from a review of various peace movements, especially the popular nuclear disarmament movement, to an assessment of current peace education efforts, and in the process reviewing their challenges and possible improvements to peace education. Crucially, Te Whāriki, a Māori concept of holistic learning and living supports values-led education across all levels of schooling in the country, much of which has a behavioral focus, including conflict resolution. A more in-depth focus using this concept carries through into higher education offering learning and skills across the breadth of peacebuilding and analysis. Yet funding challenges beset the continuance and advancing research and development of peace education. Broader inclusion in curriculum across all schools would further help embed the needed cultural awareness to increase a society-wide capacity for peacemaking. The latter would further decolonization by helping to end racism and structural violence in this postcolonial society.

Michael Minch offers a view of Northern Ireland, as one of the Global North's longest standing conflicts. This chapter's distinct contribution is the working through of deeper philosophical issues applicable not only to Northern Ireland, but to other cases. Minch discusses the emergence of peacebuilding, but also its limitations. Focus turns here to the peace education innovators at Corrymeela and Glencree. Minch advocates continued pursuance of a largely yet untapped wealth of practice and knowledge into policy and larger structural change, or in Nietzsche's words, a long obedience in the same direction.

Marie Nissanka's discussion of Sri Lanka, is another reminder of the collision of lengthy civil wars and fractured societies, and therefore the challenges of implementing peace education. Here the combination of a colonial history, competing Sinhalese and Tamil nationalistic narratives, identity politics, power asymmetries and the linguistically segregated public education system all contributed to the current situation. This

chapter explores the challenges and opportunities that are linked to mainstreaming peace education by providing a critical analysis of the relevant curricular documents and textbooks that were created under a liberal peacebuilding agenda during the civil war.

Mercedes Somosierra's chapter addresses the situation of peace education in Uruguay bringing together its fractured elements. The presence of peace education in the structures of national public education, and National Human Rights Education Law, acts as an umbrella for peacebuilding in education. Yet this framing is the very weakness of such endeavors in a country where these liberal ideas of organizations like the Movement of Educators for Peace are viewed with derision; the latter's efforts are examined in this hostile context.

* * *

The authors work through these cases, presenting points of action over various post-conflict and postcolonial states. This analytical collection offers points of comparison for best practices and relationships between state government and civil society. EGP aims to continue to publish future analysis and advance a country profile index. And constructing and curating the first ever Global Peace Education Index, as a yearly report of countries and societies (institutions, schools, and organizations), ranked based on implementation of peace education in school systems.

Among our authors' observations is an acknowledged reality that peace education is not a panacea. The challenges facing our ten country case studies are legion. Peace education does offer, however, the basics of building new societal relations, as well as the deeper transformative capacities to deal with past trauma, build more equitable societies, and embed conflict prevention into social fabrics. Indeed, hope lies in Curle's foreseen future where motivated and equipped peacebuilders are ready to make the world a better place. We hope this work inspires, informs, and instructs those in troubled times seeking to work through the world's most urgent problems.

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CHAPTER ONE

PEACE EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN: ACTORS AND IMPLEMENTATION

HOGAI ARYOUBI, SEYED ALI HOSSEINI, AND ATTAULLAH WAHIDYAR

Introduction

There are massive structural injustices in Afghanistan's education system-such as being the only country on earth in which secondary-level girls are not allowed to get an education. This form of indirect structural violence in the education system affects a significant part of the population. Afghanistan has a population of approximately 32.9 million, of which about 16 million are under the age of 15, presenting a significant young population.[1] It is important to note that the state is still an active conflict setting where there is a continuous worsening of life quality for many of its citizens. Much of the conflicts, including the British Anglo-Afghan Wars, the Soviet Invasion, Civil War, US-led Invasion, the Taliban Offensive, left a devastating impact on public sectors, including the national education system.

This chapter is focused on providing an overview of peace education in Afghanistan, including the major actors, implementation, and successes and challenges. First, we provide a literature review to briefly discuss the recent context, history, conflict, and education in Afghanistan. This is followed by a discussion on Afghanistan's key actors, including state and non-state actors in peace education; an overview of peace education curricula and programs implementation; and the successes and challenges

[1] *National Statistic and Information Authority of Afghanistan (NSIA): Key Statistical Indicators* (Kabul: *NSIA Publications,* 2021), 3, accessed September 1, 2022, from_https://invest.gov.af/theme3/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Afghanistan-Statistical-Yearbook-first-Version.pdf.

of peace education in the state. Finally, we provided a list of recommendations that addressed the challenges that we outlined in the discussion.

The aim of this chapter is to answer the three following questions:

1. How is peace education implemented in Afghanistan?
2. Who are key actors (state and non-state) in peace education in Afghanistan and how do the state and non-state actors interact in peace education institutionalization?
3. What are successes, challenges, and barriers for peace education in Afghanistan?

In order to answer these questions, we undertook a brief literature review and a textual analysis. The texts entail curricular resources relating to peace education key actors in the past two decades, including the Afghanistan Ministry of Education and a range of non-state actors. The main documents reviewed included Afghanistan's National Curriculum Framework, national textbooks, and public teacher training manuals.

Literature review

During and after the Soviet war in Afghanistan, there was a significant increase in the number of madrassas (religious schools) in Pakistan and Afghanistan.[2] Some of these madrassas have provided educational support to the first and second generations of the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban group, which took control of Afghanistan after its civil war ended in 1996.[3] One of their key notorious education policies was to ban girls from schooling. Maulvi Qalamuddin, a former Deputy Minister during the Taliban regime, stated that the girls' education ban was only temporary in order to prevent opposite gender contact.[4] After the fall of the Taliban in late 2001, a promotion of education for children, especially for girls due to

[2] Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 149.
[3] William Maley, "The Taliban: Fundamentalist, Traditionalist or Totalitarian?", in *Afghanistan: Identity, Society and Politics since 1980,* (ed.) Micheline Centlivres-Demont (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015), 102.
[4] Qaribu Yahaya Nasidi, "Malala: Stand Up Against Extremism." *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies* 3, no. 12, (2016): 79, accessed June 3, 2021, from http://www.ijiras.com/2016/Vol_3-Issue_12/paper_18.pdf.

the Taliban's former stance,[5] became a major priority for the new government and its international supporters. However, with the resurgence of Taliban in 2003, many schools have turned into a battlefield and, as a result, many schools, especially girls' schools as it was previously distinctly forbidden, were attacked.[6] Despite several attempts at peace negotiations, the Taliban have continued their armed opposition to the Afghan government and eventually in 2021 took over the country, ousting the democratically elected government. While conflict in Afghanistan has many international and domestic dimensions, the current conflict continues to have strong ideological aspects that are justified by values and norms from both sides. Beside the Taliban's strict position regarding girls' education, the content of education has been a constantly contested issue.

There is violence found not only in the Taliban's madrassas, but also in government state schools. Direct and indirect violence either exists or is amplified in several ways through education in Afghanistan. We will briefly overview Johan Galtung's theories of violence, as we will discuss the most recent forms of violence further on in the successes and challenges section. Galtung describes violence as direct or indirect, and for the latter, it can be cultural, structural, or a combination.[7] Cremin and Guilherme define direct violence as physical, psychological, or verbal attacks or aggression; structural violence as the systematic harming or disadvantaging of specific individuals or groups in society; and cultural violence as constructed into discourses around specific individuals or groups and their capabilities, entitlements, and relative importance, in society.[8]

The issues of overt violence found in Afghanistan has led to a global effort to secure peace in Afghanistan through education. Hundreds of programs were created, many attempting to implement a peace-based education system. This was important, because it is not just any education that will be helpful, as seen with the Taliban's madrassa education that explicitly taught violence. There is a need for an education in Afghanistan that is centered on a model of peace that is based on Galtung's positive

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[5] Roozbeh Shirazi, "Schooling in Afghanistan." in *Going to school in South Asia*, (ed.) Amita Gupta (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), 14.
[6] Maley, 102.
[7] Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 169.
[8] Hilary Cremin and Alexandre Guilherme, "Violence in Schools: Perspectives (and Hope) from Galtung and Buber," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 48, no. 11 (2015): 3.

peace. Galtung defines peace as either positive or negative.[9] Cremin and Bevington summarize negative peace as "a state or condition where there is an absence of direct violence" and positive peace as "not only the absence of direct violence but the absence of indirect violence and the presence of harmony and social justice."[10] Galtung states that positive peace focuses on the root causes of violence by addressing injustices, drivers, and conflict legacies.[11] Further, Galtung argues that positive peace is always brought about through peaceful means.[12] Therefore, the emphasis on a positive peace based education is vital in Afghanistan.[13]

It is important to note that there is no single peace education model in Afghanistan, and that many programs have been implemented based on local contexts to address local needs and desires.[14] Yazdani defined peace education succinctly as "both a philosophy and a process: the process empowers people with the skills, attitudes and knowledge to create a safe world and build a sustainable environment. The philosophical aspect provides knowledge of nonviolence, love and compassion and harmonious relationships".[15] Further, Standish describes the three main goals of peace education as "recognizing violence, resolving conflict nonviolently, and working towards outcomes congruent with positive peace".[16] In this chapter we will discuss how different models of peace education are conceived and implemented by different actors in the field in Afghanistan.

Key actors: State and non-state

The main coordinating body for peace education in Afghanistan is the Ministry of Education (MoE). Despite efforts, there is no formal state-based mechanism for cooperation or coordination on peace education

[9] Galtung, 83.
[10] Cremin and Bevington, 3.
[11] Johan Galtung, "Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding," *Impact of Science on Society* 9, no. 25 (1976): 303.
[12] Galtung, 172.
[13] Hogai Aryoubi, *Women's Narratives of Education in Conflict-Affected Afghanistan*, PhD dissertation (Cambridge: University of Cambridge 1990), 55.
[14] Leonisa Ardizzone, "Towards Global Understanding: The Transformative Role of Peace Education." *Comparative Education* 2, no. 2 (2002): 19
[15] Hafiza Yazdani, *Peace Education in Afghanistan: A Comparative Study of Conflict and Post-Conflict School Textbooks* (Global Campaign for Peace Education, 2018): 1.
[16] Katerina Standish, "Looking for Peace in National Curriculum: The PECA Project in New Zealand," *Journal of Peace Education* 13, no. 1 (2016): 20.

related activities in both content as well as provision. The non-state actors are involved in advocating and promoting different aspects of peace education, such as conflict resolution, democracy education, human rights education, and the UN declarations on peace education and citizenship education, along with many others. Some actors develop training materials on peace education, and some provide training at the community level. Others work with schools, or with specific communities, institutions, or policies. Efforts have been made to develop a peace education working group at the national level, so that the work of all actors can be well coordinated and synergized. However, according to an interview with a senior advisor at the MoE,[17] the diversity of funding windows and their related requirements in terms of content and geography, supplemented by the desire of actors to quickly implement rather than coordinate, resulted in the failure of such efforts.

State actors: Peace education curricula and programs implementation

There are several ways in which peace education is formally implemented in Afghanistan by state actors: the MoE and the Ministry of Higher Education. First, we will discuss the National Curriculum Framework. This will be followed by an overview of the peace education curricula and programs in the schooling system. Then we review the peace-education based curricula and programs at the higher education level. Finally, we discuss some of the major non-state actors and their link to the state actors.

National curriculum framework

Peace is discussed in several areas of the Afghanistan National Curriculum Framework. When it was first developed in 2002 by the newly formed education ministry, the goals included respect for human rights and countering terrorism, drug abuse, conflict and acts of discrimination.[18] In a subsequent year, a textbook on life skills was added to cover topics such as self-awareness, decision-making, problem-solving, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconciliation. In the curriculum, the Afghan government has listed that one of the major aims of education is to build "the capacity of young people to contribute to a peaceful, stable, prosperous and

[17] Senior Advisor, interview by authors, Kabul, Afghanistan, May, 2021.
[18] Ministry of Education of Afghanistan. "Curriculum Framework Afghanistan" *Afghanistan Ministry of Education Publications* 1, no. 1 (2003): 16-17.

sustainable society."[19] The section of the document that outlines the rationale for the curriculum describes that one of the four student competency areas is based on values in which, "Young Afghans will work together to live and coexist peacefully, while respecting religion, culture, and values – including those of minorities. They will be resilient against extremism."[20]

It was in the third round of curriculum reform in 2017-2020 that a National Competency Framework was added to the national curriculum to guide incorporating competencies and sub-competencies such as inclusivity, diversity, social justice, among others, into school textbooks and teacher preparation curriculum. This updated national curriculum also has an explicit peace-based objective included in every schooling level. The first primary level describes the peace-based objective as: "Peacefully participating in games and activities with other children," while the second primary level states: "Playing and participating peacefully together, while honoring their own position in the group and respecting others."[21] The lower secondary level describes the peace-based objective as: "Solving issues peacefully within and outside peer groups while being just and benevolent", while the upper secondary level states: "Acting in a just and benevolent way in order to live peacefully together with other people, while respecting cultural and religious differences."[22]

In the recently developed Curriculum Framework for general education, Peaceful Living and Citizenship are considered as cross curricular themes, hence included in both content as well as teaching of all school subjects where appropriate. The traditional Islamic education emphasis on *Akhlaq* and *Adab* are being revived and emphasized in the new curriculum framework. Akhlaq meaning the rights of others (all creatures, including humans) and respecting them is emphasized in the content of Islamic education in schools and Adab as manners. The newly revised curriculum envisions the new generation to be trained as peaceful citizens with critical and analytical minds, problem solving and conflict resolution competencies.

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[19] Ministry of Education of Afghanistan. "Curriculum Framework of General Education: Learning for a Sustainable Life," *Afghanistan Ministry of Education Publications* 1, no. 1 (2018): 3.
[20] Ibid., 7.
[21] Ibid., 11-12.
[22] Ibid., 12-13.

Textbooks

Textbooks have been a site of contention in Afghanistan through the last four decades. Yazdani found that in the most recent national Afghan textbooks, specifically in an evaluation of Dari language and Algebra textbooks, the state was able to better meet peace education objectives through an increase in relevant references to the field in comparison to former governments' textbooks on the same subject.[23]

Yazdani argues that the textbooks in usage during the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan government (1978 to 1992) and later the Mujahideen Islamic State of Afghanistan government (1992 to 1996), "contained less information relevant to peace education" and "the previous textbooks also contained information that clearly favored political party influence and supported undesirable education or even education for war".[24] The increase of peace education elements in the contemporary curricula may be due to the increased participation and influence of the international community in Afghanistan's post-conflict education sector.

The study by Yazdani, through content analysis, found that for the Dari language textbook, the communist government provided 32 relevant references to elements of peace education; the mujahideen government provided 38 relevant references to elements of peace education; and finally, the current democratic government provides 102 relevant references to elements of peace education.[25] The elements of peace education that were established included recognition of violence; nonviolent conflict transformation; wellbeing; peaceful relationships; social justice; gender impartiality; prevention of harm; and ecological responsibility.[26] There has been a marked improvement and continued progress in the implementation of peace education in the national textbooks.

Teacher training program

The Afghanistan Ministry of Education's Teacher Education General Directorate collaborated with UNESCO, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit's Basic and Secondary Education Programme, and the German Civil Peace Service in 2013 in order to

[23] Yazdani, 1.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

develop peace education curricula for the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) in Afghanistan.[27] The TTC peace education curriculum was a two-credit course that was a part of a 96-credit diploma. A draft was created by a MoE working group with the support of UNESCO consultants, who utilized peace education programs by the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) as a foundation for the draft. The peace education course included four themes: peacebuilding behaviors, principles of human rights, peace and conflict, and rights-based pedagogy. From 2013-2015 an extensive review of the curriculum was conducted by both religious scholars and TTC lecturers and was finalized in 2015.[28] The courses on peacebuilding and conflict resolution have been offered in six private and public universities namely Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education (a private university in Kabul), Herat University, Nangarhar University, Kandahar University, Shaikh Zayed University in Khost, and Alberoni University in Kapisa.

Non-state actors

There are numerous non-state actors who provide a vast variety of education services, including major international organizations, international humanitarian and development NGOs, and many Afghan civil society organizations. Here, our focus is on those who particularly provide peace education in the country.

A notable non-state actor in Afghanistan is the well-known UNESCO, which provides technical assistance in the development of the Afghan national curriculum and therefore has a strong partnership with the government. The organization supports the development of the Life Competencies Framework, which has peace education linked as a sub-competency.

Another major global organization is the International Rescue Committee (IRC), which develops peace-based toolkits, reading curriculums, and training for teachers and local peace committees. Along with these programs, the IRC also builds the capacity of the Afghanistan Ministry of Education. Other organizations, such as World Vision International (WVI) and Help

[27] Razia Stanikzai, Khalil Fazli, and Dianne Denton, "Training Teachers in Peace Education in Afghanistan Achievements and Challenges", in *Education and Development in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects*, Uwe H. Bittlingmayer, Anne-Marie Grundmeier, Reinhart Kößler, Diana Sahrai, and Fereschta Sahrai (eds.) (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2019), 201.
[28] Ibid., 203.

the Afghan Children (HTAC) also support public schooling and create peace-based curriculums in the country.

A notable NGO is the Organization of Fast Relief and Development (OFRD) which contributes to peace education in Afghanistan in alternative ways. OFRD offers two main activities of broadcasting television theater performance and broadcasting radio drama series on access to justice, peace building and conflict resolution, human rights and media through short scenes with cross cutting project themes as youth, gender and disability.

Unlike many developed states, non-state actors in Afghanistan directly support and sustain the National Education Ministry in Afghanistan. This enables many non-state actors to have wide reaching influence in the state for the development and implementation of peace education. This offers a diverse range of peace education programs. Many of the large-scale global organizations, such as UNESCO and IRC, directly aid the state actors in peace education and education in general. The relationship enables support in the field, but also external influence. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the peace education programs by all the different non-state actors due to the lack of data and possibly due to poor monitoring in many insecure areas.

Successes and challenges

Following analysis of implementation of peace education in Afghanistan, this section addresses the successes and challenges to peace education in the country. We claim that the success of peace education is strongly related to the political, economic and social contexts of the country.

The post-Taliban Afghanistan era has witnessed a significant increase in the number of students, especially girls, in all parts of the country. This was considered a major achievement by many in the international community as the education system was badly shattered during the resistance against the USSR, inter-fighting between Mujahedin groups, and imposing of limitations on girls' education by the Taliban. The number of students grew from less than a million registered students in 2001 to over seven million students in the 2010-2011 school year. The number of teachers also increased eightfold from 2002-2008.[29] This continued increase was important especially for girls, whom Taliban's restrictions on education deprived of their basic education rights. This

[29] Yahya Baiza, *Education in Afghanistan: Developments, Influences, and Legacies since 1901* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), 193.

trend continued in the following years with ratification of the new Constitution in 2004, which provided a new foundation for education development, enforcement of the Education Law in 2008, and advancement of three National Education Strategic Plans.[30] Another success is the marked improvement in the quality of education in post-Taliban Afghanistan. There has been significant progress in the development of references to peace education in textbooks, building of new facilities, improved teacher training, and of technical education relative to the Taliban-era.[31] The improvements in access to education and quality of education has been continuing, albeit at a slower pace.

Despite the significant progress in the last two decades, Afghanistan's education system still suffers from various challenges. Some of these challenges are connected to the overall situation of the country, such as the general insecurity, poverty, poor infrastructures and facilities, while others are related to, or are specially affecting education, such as the opposition of armed groups to the form and content of education. Many of these challenges are in the direct violence category, which includes attacks on schools and education system by Taliban and other terrorist groups; cultural violence, which includes the deprivation of girls from education; and finally, structural violence, which includes prejudice against Afghans who belong to the minority Shia group. As a result of these various problems, about 3.7 million children, including 60 percent of girls, are out-of-school in Afghanistan, and of which about two million live in direct conflict or disaster-affected areas within the state.[32]

Another challenge is the increasing insecurity in Afghanistan. After 2004, there was an observed resurgence of the Taliban that may have hampered the majority of the progress made in education. This also negatively affected access to education in many parts of the country. Girls' education has been more vulnerable to insecurity and opposition by extremist groups. Attacks on school started soon after the resurgence of the Taliban, which hampered access to school by children, especially girls across the country. In 2018, UNICEF documented 192 attacks on schools,

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Education Cannot Wait (ECW). "Education Cannot Wait, UNICEF and a Coalition of UN, NGO Partners and Donors Launch a Multi-year Education Response Programme." *ECW Press Release: The Gov. Of Afghanistan* 1, no. 1 (2019): 1, accessed September 1, 2022, from https://www.educationcannotwait.org/news-stories/press-releases/the-gov-afghanistan-education-cannot-wait-unicef-and-coalition-un-ngo.