

# **THE DEVELOPMENT, CONFLICT AND SECURITY NEXUS: DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AS PEACE-BUILDING**

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Since the end of World War Two there have been an estimated 250 significant conflicts around the world, which have cost the lives of over 50 million people and caused hundreds of millions of highly vulnerable people to be driven into exile. This widespread conflict also carries with it secondary contiguous effects such as impoverishment, forced migration and intercommunal tension often accompanied by xenophobia. It is compounded by the role of significant vested interests which deliberately profit from suffering - such as the arms industry and states which derive strategic influence from conflict or actively incite wars in other regions. From a public policy perspective, it has been prudent to take persistent conflict as the norm, be it from active engagement in military actions or securitisation reacting to the constant threat of acts of terror.

Across the globe, with security at the forefront of governmental action, education has remained a counter-balance in an attempt to build peaceful interdependent societies. This is often a struggle against prevailing circumstances. Educationalists will, by instinct and training, communicate hope and futures to all those lucky enough to have the opportunity to attend school. Globally this is considered as the formative role of teachers in society, yet paradoxically most are working in conditions and situations where futures are being actively denied to children. Development and security stand, as they always have, in tension with each other. We can see this in numbers - and the trajectory is not comforting. The *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (SIPRI, 2018) estimated that in 2017 alone global military spending reached \$1.7 trillion, whereas in the same year the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD, 2019) estimated that global

development aid contributions amounted to a comparatively paltry \$146.6 billion. In both sectors, the percentage rise on the previous year was 1.1 per cent.

Development education (DE) as it has evolved has included peace building as a component aspect of its pedagogy. It is an aspect of the work that governments often find difficult to reconcile with their own political sensitivities. There is also the theoretical and practical compatibility which DE has with the long tradition of 'peace education' that exists in regions often affected by conflict. Currently around the world several different terms are used for what can generically be referred to as 'educating for peace'. 'Tolerance', 'interdependence' and 'development' are often used as hooks for informing the design of programmes on peace building within formal and informal education environments. The contexts may vary considerably, but the principles and methods around the world are remarkably similar and show a significant overlap. For example, 'peace education' is accepted as a standard enough subject in the United States (US), whereas in parts of the European Union (EU) 'development education' takes on a similar remit. In the United Kingdom (UK) 'global learning' has become a catchall term that engages issues to do with a peaceful society, and in the Republic of Ireland there has been the promotion of 'Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)'. In areas that have undergone recent periods of conflict the terminology of peace education also takes similar forms. In Rwanda it is termed 'education for peace'; in Sri Lanka, 'education for conflict resolution'; in South Africa, 'peace and reconciliation'; in Lebanon 'global education'; in Mauritius 'education for development'; and in Burundi 'peace-building in schools'. In Northern Ireland, 'education for mutual understanding', 'shared' and 'integrated' education, have all contributed to peace building.

Educating for peace, as pedagogy, also carries with it some complex situational adaptations, which can be seen with the South African example, where the government has a policy of promoting 'conflict

resolution'. This aspect of the subject, the situational adaptation, may include terms such as 'reconciliation', 'transformation', 'peace-building', 'peace-making' - or as is experienced in Northern Ireland - 'mutual understanding' 'diversity' or 'community relations'. We have also seen the emergence of 'inter-culturalism', which has become immensely influential in Eastern Europe with regions dealing with the complexities of a new Cold War. All reflect specific applications, but key principles remain constant.

For the practitioners of peace education there is the ongoing understanding that conflict exists at different levels across societies, from the interpersonal and familial to the structural and political. Peace education has a tendency to encounter all of these levels while emphasising socially sensitive aspects within specific geo-political situations. The *foci*, as such, are those dysfunctional aspects of human development that have created the conditions and mentalities that generate conflict. The objective of practitioners - from those who address domestic violence and gun violence in the inner cities of the US, to those who are working to overcome the effects of genocide in Rwanda or Democratic Republic of Congo - is to embed peaceful endeavour in societal development through education. One of the most influential textbooks on the subject, *Peace Education* (2003) by Ian Harris and Mary Lee Morrison, introduces the topic and its themes succinctly and for this it is a worthy starting point:

“Peace education is currently considered to be both a philosophy and a process involving skills, including listening, reflection, problem-solving, cooperation and conflict resolution. The process involves empowering people with the skills, attitudes and knowledge to create a safe world and build a sustainable environment” (Harris and Morrison, 2003: 9).

The key themes of peace education can be recognised across educational systems, often being integrated into other subjects. While the subject 'peace education' has been refining its role across different curricula for decades, the interface that exists with other similar subjects has become increasingly relevant, with some educational disciplines being readily adaptable to the application of peace building within the local educational environment. In the 'community of educators' working on themes relevant to peace education, there are practitioners teaching and students learning through the media of human rights education, gender studies, social justice education, sustainable development education and citizenship education – to mention a few. It is an interface where subjects are often at cross-purposes and practitioners are possibly not as concerted or as connected as they should be. There is, however, general agreement across these fields that common purpose could be strengthened by common practice. This, to an extent, is the greatest challenge facing peace education and by necessity approaches development education, as a sector, for solutions.

An additional useful and authoritative definition of peace education comes from UNICEF, which states that it is:

“...the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level” (Fountain, 1999: 1).

Peace education in this instance is pro-active and works through various methods of communicative interaction. Indeed, *instilling* the idea of peace is seen as central to this UNICEF interpretation – it is a culture enhancing exercise, seeing cultural formation as central to societal cohesion. The

perceived method of doing this, accruing resources and material from international experience, is to *embed* the ideal of peace as an area of study throughout curricula.

Consequently, the concept of peace as an educational process needs to be built into a complex of layers across curricula for different contexts and is usually not explicit as a theme. There has been an ongoing debate at an international level and among educational theorists on the role of peace education in the promotion of ‘reconciliation’ in particular in different environments. For example, the US-based *Peace and Justice Studies Association* (PJSA) has a long-standing appreciation of the methodology and pedagogy of peace education as a means of bringing people together to reconcile historic and perceived differences. This interpretation of peace education contains a strong global development emphasis. That is that they introduce global themes about reconciliation in their day to day work, emphasising the interdependence of people and cultures. Their definition of peace education is, that it is a:

“multi-disciplinary academic and moral quest for solutions to the problems of war and injustice with the consequential development of institutions and movements that will contribute to a peace that is based on justice and reconciliation” (COPRED, 1986)

This approach places central importance on *the knowledge focus and theory* of the subject and in this may not be as action-centred as some of the other applied initiatives. Nevertheless, the message is very strongly conveyed and is an internationally recognised position on peace education.

Alternatively, the interdisciplinary aspect of DE (from a European understanding) is where its educational strength lies and in that it enriches various subjects with specific universal ideals (Bourn, 2014: 9-11). This methodology has also been pioneered and encouraged by the

*International Peace Research Association (IPRA)* from its inception as long ago as 1972. The premise of these various definitions is to connect to a formative interdisciplinary pedagogy, yet facilitates the more conventional role of education in *actively constructing* society. It must give society alternatives and a means of opposition when necessary. Indeed, as Reardon noted, historically:

“... education has legitimized warfare and nurtured militarism. Now the task for peace education is to legitimize the search for alternatives within the framework of social evolution and human development” (Reardon, 1996: 156).

Peace education has the potential of introducing alternative, more protean, understandings of development – such as peaceful means of protest. As Burns and Arpeslagh noted in *Three Decades of Peace Education Around the World*: ‘Peace education clearly emerged as a concern for “one world, or none”, from its early concerns with personal peace to an overriding concern with societal peace issues’ (Burns and Arpeslagh, 1996: 11). They go on to note that the implication of this process is the shift from studying the underlying tenets of a peaceful society to engendering a culture of peace, which is interpreted as an objective, in the understanding that: ‘... peace education can shape the conditions for a peace culture...’ (Ibid.: 20).

The resolution of both the knowledge focused approach and the methods and practice of peace education has also brought forward more ubiquitous definitions. Following on from the work of David Hicks (1985) in *Education for Peace: Issues, Dilemmas and Alternatives*, and Johan Galtung and Daisaku Ikeda (1995) in *Choose Peace*, there was an attempt to introduce what they termed ‘peace studies’ in a manner that aimed to combine the knowledge and the skill-building aspects. The formative nature of this links the understanding of the reasons for conflict to the means of actual peace building. This assimilates social and psychological

aspects into the work. What comes through in the works of these theorists is the idea that peace education can become a central educational aspect of policies for interpersonal wellbeing and community development. The cultural aspects of conflict are addressed in a process which aims to adapt socio-cultural aspects of society that anticipate conflict and its reasons, and take preventative action (Hicks, 1985; Galtung and Ikeda, 1995: 12-17). In response to this challenge there is the belief that peace, as an absence of conflict and violence, is an aspiration that can be normalised within society – violence an illness that can be cured. Peace education, in effect, is presented as supporting community integration. This interpretation was subsequently enhanced by the more civil society based ‘deliberative dialogue’ method typified by attempts to transform learners into agents of positive social change through public discourse, constructive communication and experiential learning (Kester, 2010; Finley, 2013).

On this problem of defining peace education, the concept demands comparative analyses, the relating of scenarios, human experience, events and similarities. With a comparative approach ‘peace’ is presented in its broadest form to overcome the limitations that may be brought to bear by limiting or confining our understanding of peaceful society to national or ethnocentric definitions. The more global approach has led to a strong affinity between what can loosely be described as global development studies or more precisely what David Hicks has listed as ‘development education, world studies, multicultural education’ and peace education (Hicks, cited in Burns and Arpeslagh, 1996: 161). Development education has the benefit of engaging with the geo-political questions of human development (such as poverty, climate change, aid and trade) while the latter peace education - as intercultural learning - has had a tendency to work from more interpersonal aspects of human development (community, psychology and sociology). This difference suggests the need for a more assertive and influential partnership between DE and peace education as pedagogy. Such a methodology would

invariably be more holistic in its understanding of development. In effect, what is being suggested here is an integration of both sectors to bring peace building to the fore in global educational culture.

From the perspective of the most influential lobby for peace education, the United Nations, it views peace education as an experience of cultural exchange with regional and national interests embedded into the schemes of work and pedagogic aspects of promoting interdependence. In generic terms the 'subject', such as it is, aims at the delivery and facilitation of knowledge, skills, the attitudes and values that can inform peace. This culture of peace is not new, it was explored by UNESCO at the 'International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men', which was held at Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, in 1989. The Congress recommended to UNESCO that it should: '... construct a new vision of peace by developing a peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men' (UNESCO, 1995). Underpinning this was the development of an educational network and a research import which would actively work towards this.

The United Nations and its various specialised agencies, educational institutions, numerous non-governmental organisations, and civil society networks have - by stealth - brought forward the theory and practice of educating for peace by collaborating on modular and curricular aspects of the subject. This has manifested itself through the growth of international partnerships. Furthermore, there has been an increased appreciation of the role of the web and social media in offering significant technological opportunities in this process. To carry the influence and to enhance the consensual aspect of peace building as a lobby - involving agencies such as the United Nations, the churches, non-governmental development organisations and educationalists - the various levels of engagement need continual dialogue and scrutiny. The study of comparative state violence, for example, is implicit to the understanding

of the nature of peaceful society. Likewise, the high levels of domestic violence or the casual portrayal of violence in the popular media or gaming industry, needs to be analysed and challenged. In a rapidly changing social context this rounder understanding of peace building needs to be in itself developmental, evolving.

To conclude this clarion call for the integration of development and peace education, it must be noted that peace building through education is brought out strongly in the approach taken through most international human rights documents - such as the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which explicitly challenges all forms of violence and espouses a society which has as its key principle the primacy of peaceful interaction. With this in mind, educating for peace has a particular and important role in the process of human development. In effect, learning to live peacefully is implicit to the process of overcoming societal, causal, intercommunity, domestic, state and structural violence. All are implicated in the same dynamic, working towards a culture of reconciliation and peace building as a developmental process.

### **Issue 28 of *Policy and Practice***

The dilemmas which come with conflict, security and peace building, are at the core of this issue of *Policy and Practice*. The theme is 'The Development, Conflict and Security Nexus: Theory and Practice' and it explores the interconnectivity between international development, conflict and security through a development education understanding. It is a joint initiative which ties the innovative work of the Development Studies Association of Ireland (DSAI), *Policy and Practice*, and the Centre for Global Education. Issue 28 is a special issue of the journal published in partnership with the DSAI with its Focus articles in particular concentrating on the problems of dealing with the legacy of conflict. Suming Khoo leads the discourse with a look at the contradictions that exist between securitisation and development practice, concluding that

development ethics need to be strengthened to present a bulwark against a conflict prone geo-political environment. Mairéad Smith tackles the difficult question of dealing with the trauma of the Êzîdî genocide in Iraq. In a third Focus article, Jia Wang addresses the issue of international criminal justice with reference to trials in the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia and its reading of Khmer Rouge atrocities.

The Perspectives articles in Issue 28 offer a much more ubiquitous understanding of the conversation between development and security, with Michelle Murphy surveying the findings of the *Sustainable Progress Index* for 2019. This article highlights some of the performance indicators on development from across the European Union and how Ireland has been fairing with the SDGs to this point. Then Paddy Reilly reflects on the work of the Kimmage Development Studies Centre in Dublin, its programs, innovation and contribution to development studies in Ireland since 1974. Following this Nita Mishra, one of a number of contributors from the DSAI, argues for the development of a ‘culture of peace’ in education and advocates for the introduction of a peace discourse which fosters empathy and compassion.

The first Viewpoint article for this special issue comes in the form of an extraordinary conversation between the internationally renowned journalist and commentator on the Middle-East, Robert Fisk, and the Irish film-maker and broadcaster Peadar King. The discussion covers a range of issues and highlights some pertinent concerns regarding the drift of the wars in the Middle East and the role of the international community in these wars. Finally, this issue is completed by a second Viewpoint article, an insightful analysis of the nature of global inequality ten years on from the global financial crisis by Stephen McCloskey. In this, he summarises the manner in which the crisis facilitated an unprecedented global wealth grab by elites and the way in which this increasing divergence between the global rich and poor has caused political instability around the world.

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