Innovations in Primary Education - Peace Education

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Abstract: *Peace education is an integral part of the UNICEF vision of quality basic education. The 1990 World Declaration on Education for All clearly states that basic learning needs comprise not only essential tools such as literacy and numeracy, but also the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required to live and work in dignity and to participate in development. It further states that the satisfaction of those needs implies a responsibility to promote social justice, acceptance of differences, and peace.*

Keywords: Peace Education, Innovations, Child Rights, Skills, Attitude, Effective, UNICEF, Knowledge

1. Introduction of Peace Education

Peace education in UNICEF refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior 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.

It is UNICEF's position that peace education has a place in all societies – not only in countries undergoing armed conflict or emergencies. Because lasting behaviour change in children and adults only occurs over time, effective peace education is necessarily a long-term process, not a short-term intervention. While often based in schools and other learning environments, peace education should ideally involve the entire community.

Peace Education in Practice

Schooling and other educational experiences that reflect UNICEF's approach to peace education should:
- Function as 'zones of peace', where children are safe from conflict in the community
- Uphold children's basic rights as enumerated in the CRC
- Develop a climate, within the school or other learning environment, that models peaceful and Rights-respectful behaviour in the relationships between all members of the school community: teachers, administrators, other staff, parents, and children
- Demonstrate the principles of equality and non-discrimination in administrative policies and practices
- Draw on the knowledge of peace-building that already exists in the community, including means of dealing with conflict that is effective, non-violent, and rooted in the local culture.
- Handle conflicts—whether between children, or between children and adults— in a non-violent manner that respects the rights and dignity of all involved
- Integrate an understanding of peace, human rights, social justice and global issues throughout the curriculum whenever possible
- Provide a forum for the explicit discussion of values of peace and social justice

- Use teaching and learning methods that promote participation, co-operation, problem-solving and respect for differences
- Allow opportunities for children to put peace-making into practice, both in the educational setting and in the wider community
- Provide opportunities for continuous reflection and professional development of all educators in relation to issues of peace, justice and rights.

Initiatives related to peace education
A number of educational initiatives have areas of overlap with peace education, and with each other. These include children's rights/human rights education, education for development, gender training, global education, life skills education, landmine awareness, and psychosocial rehabilitation. Each can be thought of as providing another lens or perspective through which to examine how peace can be 'mainstreamed' in basic education.

Children's rights/human rights education
Children's rights/human rights education and peace education are closely linked activities that complement and support each other. Peace is a fundamental pre-condition without which rights cannot be realised, while at the same time, the ensuring of basic rights is essential to bringing about peace. Rights education usually includes the component of learning about the provisions of international documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children are encouraged to understand the impact of rights violations, both at home and abroad, and to develop empathy and solidarity with those whose rights have been denied. Rights education encourages the development of skills that will enable children to act in ways that uphold and promote rights, both their own and others'. It also addresses the responsibilities that come with rights.

Education for Development
Education for Development is the term used in UNICEF to describe an approach to teaching and learning which builds a commitment to global solidarity, peace, acceptance of differences, social justice and environmental awareness in young people. Its aim is to empower children and youth to participate in bringing about constructive change, both locally and globally. Five basic concepts of Education for

Development are interdependence, images and perceptions, social justice, conflict and conflict resolution, and change and the future. These concepts are approached as interdisciplinary perspectives that can be incorporated into the teaching of a wide range of subject matter, rather than as specific subjects in themselves. Interactive, participatory, cooperatively-structured teaching methods are as important as the content of Education for Development.

Gender training
Gender conflict is found in societies around the globe, and gender discrimination and conflict is a leading cause of violence. A number of gender training initiatives have begun to address the prevention of violence against women, and alternative ways in which gender conflict may be handled. These initiatives promote attitudes and values that emphasise the rights of girls and women to safety, respect, non-discrimination, and empowerment.

Some programmes focus specifically on boys, helping them better understand their relationship to girls, their roles and responsibilities in family life, stereotypes about masculinity, and communication skills for dealing with conflict. Gender training initiatives have an essential perspective to add to peace education activities, which have sometimes tended to overlook the gender component in violence and conflict resolution.

Global education
It incorporates themes such as the environment and ecology, peace, tolerance, conflict avoidance, personal health, cooperative skills, multiculturalism, comparative views on human values, and human and child rights. It is based on a four-dimensional conceptual model. The model is comprised of the temporal dimension (linking the past, present and future), the spatial dimension. Global education gives priority to active, learner-based teaching methods, peer-learning, problem solving, community participation, and conflict resolution skills. It is values-based and future-oriented. Global education provides another broad curricular framework for peace education activities.

Life skills education
Life skills education enables children and young people to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into action. It promotes the development of a wide range of skills that help children and young people cope effectively with the challenges of everyday life, enabling them to become socially and psychologically competent. Life skills can include cooperation, negotiation, communication, decision-making, problem-solving, coping with emotions, self-awareness, empathy, critical and creative thinking, dealing with peer pressure, and awareness of risk, assertiveness, and preparation for the world of work. Not all life skills—such as knowing how to carry out a job interview or being able to assess the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS—are a part of peace education.

Landmine awareness
In a number of countries that have undergone, or are undergoing armed conflict, UNICEF supports landmine awareness campaigns and educational programmes. These are often considered part of a country's peace education initiatives. It would perhaps be more accurate to describe landmine awareness as an aspect of life skills education relating to issues of personal health and safety, rather than issues relating to the resolution and prevention of conflict. Landmine awareness develops skills and promotes behavioural changes that are essential in helping children cope safely with situations of armed conflict, and are a critical educational intervention to help children deal with the impact of armed conflict.

Psychosocial rehabilitation
UNICEF supports programmes for the psychosocial rehabilitation of children affected by war and violence in a number of countries that have undergone – or are undergoing – armed conflict. Most of these programmes are therapeutic in focus, aiming to promote self-expression, coping skills and psychological healing. Peace education is not a form of individual or group therapy. However, psychosocial rehabilitation programmes complement and support peace education when, in promoting recovery from post-traumatic stress, they help children learn new skills for dealing with conflict.

Aims of peace education
The following list summaries aims found in UNICEF peace education programmes. These are commonly expressed as knowledge, skill and attitudinal aims. Within these categories, there may be considerable overlap.

Knowledge
- Awareness of own needs, self awareness
- Understanding nature of conflict and peace
- Ability to identify causes of conflict, and non-violent means of resolution
- Conflict analysis
- Enhancing knowledge of community mechanisms for building peace and resolving conflict
- Mediation process
- Understanding of rights and responsibilities
- Understanding interdependence between individuals and societies
- Awareness of cultural heritage
- Recognition of prejudice

Skills:
- Communication: active listening, self-expression, paraphrasing, reframing
- Assertiveness
- Ability to cooperate
- Affirmation
- Critical thinking Ability to think critically about prejudice
- Ability to deal with stereotypes
- Dealing with emotions
- Problem-solving
- Ability to generate alternative solutions
- Constructive conflict resolution
- Conflict prevention
- Participation in society on behalf of peace
- Ability to live with change

Attitudes:
- Self respect, positive self image, strong self-concept
- Tolerance, acceptance of others, respect for differences
- Respect for rights and responsibilities of children and parents
- Bias awareness
- Gender equity
- Empathy
- Reconciliation
- Solidarity
- Social responsibility
- Sense of justice and equality
- Joy in living

Approaches to peace education

WITHIN SCHOOLS:
UNICEF country offices with school-based peace education programmes carry out activities in the areas of improving the school environment, curriculum development (including the production of materials for teachers and children),pre-service teacher education, and in-service teacher education.

Improving the school environment
Peace education is most effective when the skills of peace and conflict resolution are learned actively and are modeled by the school environment in which they are taught. In a number of countries, emphasis is placed on improving the school environment so that it becomes a microcosm of the more peaceful and just society that is the objective of peace education. This creates a consistency between the messages of the curriculum and the school setting, between the overt and the 'hidden' curriculum.

Curriculum development
A number of countries have developed peace education curricula, usually consisting of activities around themes such as communication, cooperation, and problem solving. Manuals have been produced to guide teachers in using these curricula with children. A series of readers has been developed for primary school children and adult literacy classes with stories and poems on peace themes.

Pre-service teacher education
In a number of countries, efforts are underway to upgrade the quality of preservice teacher education. Training may include a focus on such skills as the use of interactive and participatory teaching methods, organising cooperative group work, and facilitating group discussions. The use of these types of teaching methods is essential to quality basic education, and enables teachers to convey values of cooperation, respect for the opinions of the child, and appreciation of differences. Participatory teaching and learning strategies can be used throughout the curriculum, and are an essential component of efforts to promote peace through education.

In-service teacher education
In-service teacher education has been carried out. As is the case with pre-service teacher education, in-service teacher education may focus on participatory teaching and learning methods, as well as content areas such as children's rights or conflict resolution skills.

A teacher training college trains school principals in conflict resolution methods before students are placed in the schools to do their practice teaching. This helps to ensure administrative support for new teachers who are attempting to introduce peace education.

Outside of schools:
- Sports and recreation programmes
- Youth groups and clubs
- Training for community leaders
- Workshops for parents
- Librarians
- Media training

Other channels of communication
- Magazines for young people
- Travelling theatre
- Puppetry
- Television and radio spots
- Animation
- Peace campaigns
- Contests and exhibitions
- Revitalizing traditional modes of peacemaking

Elements of effective peace education programmes
Reviews of research on effective school-based, skill-oriented conflict resolution programmes (which have been, to date, carried out primarily in western countries) suggest that important elements may include:
- Conducting a situation analysis prior to designing the programme, and planning for monitoring and evaluation prior to beginning any intervention
- Allowing ample time to train staff/teachers, so that they can both internalize concepts and skills of peace education themselves, and be adequately prepared to convey those concepts and skills to others
- Using cooperative and interactive methods that allow for active student participation and practice
- Teaching generic problem-solving skills through the use of real-life situations
- Consistent reinforcing of conflict resolution skills learned at school in non-school contexts, for example, through educating parents and community groups in the same skills taught in the school;
- Ensuring gender and cultural sensitivity in programme design and implementation, as well as Appropriateness for the age group
- Incorporating analysis of conflicts in the community and/or the wider society, as well as of Interpersonal conflict, in the programme
- Providing young people with the opportunity to engage in constructive, peace-building activities in their school and community
- Enlisting broad-based community support for the programme from the outset, among Politicians, educators, community leaders, public health professionals, religious groups and business leaders.

2. Conclusion

Peace education is an essential component of quality basic education that aims to build the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable young people to prevent violence, resolve conflict peacefully, and promote social conditions conducive to peace and justice. Peace education is a right of all children, not only those living in situations of armed conflict. It is a long-term process that can take place in any learning environment. It should be used to focus efforts in programme development, as well as to give a sense of the wide range of activities that can promote peace through many different learning contexts.

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