

# **A Decade of Lessons Learned in Peace Education Programmes**

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## Vocabulary

Affective domain	The development of how we feel about concepts
Application	Using knowledge and skills in a situation different from that in which it was taught.
Assertiveness	When your rights and the rights of the other person are both taken into account when negotiating
Cognitive domain	The development thinking skills (the way we think)
Conflict management	Laws and punishments are the common ways of managing conflict: this is different to conflict resolution where the problem is solved and the two sides feel comfortable with each other
Curriculum	All the subjects and the way that the way they are taught together with the philosophy of the school and the attitudes of staff.
Empathy	Being able to feel as the other person feels: “walking in the shoes of the other”
Formulae	A particular plan or method of doing something
Formulaic	The accepted way of doing something
Hidden curriculum	Those values and attitudes that are never actually taught, but are modelled behaviours from teachers and adults in education. These may be positive or negative. (Discrimination is often part of a hidden curriculum.)
Internalisation	When learning becomes part of us and so we remember it always
Interactive teaching and learning	Where the learners are part of the process – not just as recipients of knowledge and skills. This is usually done through high level questioning from the teacher; not to test the learner but to help the learner move through the steps of learning so that the learning is internalised
Mediation	When a third person (who is not involved) helps two sides to solve a problem
Participatory learning	Often used inter-changeably with interactive teaching: it is when the teacher and the learners are equally involved (not “pouring the knowledge in”).
Reconciliation	When two sides can manage to solve their problem and there is forgiveness of the wrongs done
Rights-based	When everything that is done and said is in line with the principles of human rights (the principles of dignity and equality)
Synthesis	Putting together two or more quite different ideas to make a new idea

## Introduction

In 1997 I was requested by UNHCR<sup>1</sup> to develop a peace education programme primarily for refugees and primarily in Africa. I asked at one time why I was chosen for the task and the response was “you have been doing peace education all your life; you just didn’t call it that.” If that is so, the lessons learned before the last decade have already been incorporated into the programme that I developed for UNHCR that was subsequently endorsed and adopted by INEE<sup>2</sup>. In the last decade however, I have been fortunate enough to see very many programmes in action and to gather from these the lessons learned – not just in the programme that I managed but all those programmes that I have seen.

In this paper the lessons learned have been categorised as lessons of curriculum, (the content of a subject); methodology, (how the subject is taught) implementation (what has to be done so that the subject or programme actually takes place) and evaluation (how we measure the success of the programme).

While there are other valid ways of analysing lessons learned, in peace education these are the major categories of programme.

### A Decade of Lessons Learned in Peace Education

- Lessons learned in curriculum
- Lessons learned in methodology
- Lessons learned in implementation
- Lessons learned in evaluation

## Lessons of curriculum

PE consists of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes – resulting in behaviour change. Most traditional subjects for example; maths, language, even social studies (the way it is generally taught) are knowledge and skills – but there are no internal values associated with them. Subjects such as moral or religious education have values and attitudes and some knowledge as a foundation – but it has no skills and often in a school system is reduced to the formulaic knowledge base (for example; knowing the religious stories and the laws of religion but without any real understanding about how these can be applied in daily life).

**Learning** is the acquisition and development of memories and behaviors, including skills, knowledge, understanding, values, and wisdom. It is the goal of education, and the product of experience. Wikipedia website

<sup>1</sup> United Nations High Commission for Refugees: the refugee agency

<sup>2</sup> Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction

Because PE has all the elements it is, in many ways, a synthesis of all the traditional comprehensive education principles. The original idea of a comprehensive education was that each of the subject areas (the sciences and the arts) would come together – be synthesised by the learner and used to live a better life. So, for example: you could take the logic from mathematics and apply it to the history and so learn the lessons from the past ... and therefore not make the same mistakes again. We all know just how flawed that logic is. Most of us learned history in the same way as we learned our multiplication tables – by rote memorisation. And when that is used as a method of teaching, there is very little learning – when learning is defined as internalisation leading to a change in behaviour.

In addition, the application of knowledge and skills from one academic area to another (or even from one practical area to another) is an independent skill: a skill that must be deliberately taught and then practised. For example; if you are locked in a smoke-filled room how would you reach the door? What is the principle of physics involved? Do you think about the application of this knowledge? Another example: if you peel onions that have been kept in the refrigerator or if you peel them under running water you don't cry. What is the principle behind this fact? If you knew the principle – did you apply it and change your behaviour as a result?

Hence one of the first difficulties of peace education is that because it is a synthesis of the behaviours desired as a result of a comprehensive education system, education authorities assume that it is somehow already being taught – often as part of a the hidden curriculum. But if we as adults cannot transfer knowledge and skills why would we expect it in children?

The curriculum of peace education as a subject area should have the same basis as all other subjects. It should match the child's intellectual and emotional/social development; but more than that - peace education must match the child's ethical development as well. For example, very young children do not play interactively (together) – they play in parallel. Watch any group of two year olds to see this. The children

### Lessons Learned in Curriculum

- Peace education is a synthesis of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes
  - Transfer of information, skills and attitudes needs to be structured
  - Time and space to practice the new skills
- The learner's cognitive, emotional and ethical levels of development all need to be taken into account

### Lessons Learned in Curriculum 2

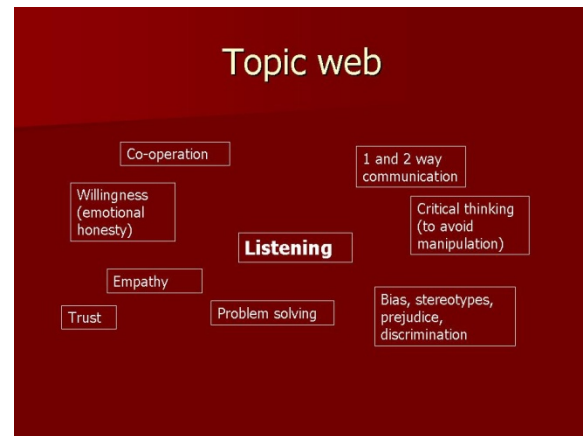
- Peace education must include critical analysis to understand which element to use and when
- There are a range of component topics in peace education which interlink and build upon each other

are not at the emotional level to interact with others. Nevertheless, we still try to teach the concept of sharing by asking very young children to take turns. Because the children are not socially at the level of sharing also means that ethically they have no understanding of equality (your turn and now my turn). This can make things very frustrating for the teachers or carers as the children simply do not understand – they will sometimes do it because the adult wants them to and they will be praised for doing so; so they do it for the reward not because it is a good thing to do. This is their level of ethical development. Understanding the stages of ethical development and so knowing how it can be effectively taught is often left out of curriculum development because many curriculum specialists do not understand it.

A second issue with the curriculum of peace education is that it requires critical analysis to decide which elements are appropriate in which situation. For those who ever studied mathematics in school: think back to the algebraic formulae you learned; learning them was not difficult but getting a problem and choosing which formulae was the correct one for that problem – that was the difficult part. In peace education it is the same: we want people to be open-minded and to co-operate with each other in order to solve problems – but we also want people to be assertive when they see wrong-doing or to stop exploitation and abuse. But which action do we use in a given situation? Exploitation is not always so clear-cut, any number of people in any number of countries have co-operated with governments and powerful people because of cultural mores and because it seemed like the right thing to do at the time. Later they discovered that many people (sometimes even themselves) were being exploited – and so by co-operating they were also exploiting. Thus an effective peace education programme needs to provide plenty of opportunity for practicing the skills and applying the knowledge learned – but in a safe and non-threatening environment.

What are the components of a peace education programme? There seem to be as many varieties of programme as there are people working in the area. Many of the things seen as intrinsically or basically ‘good’ are often included, not because they are part of a logical structure but because they are ‘good things to do’. Many component parts of an effective peace education programme are cited as full comprehensive programmes. For example, an effective peace education programme will have elements of drama, art and advocacy days – but these are not the programme; they are only parts of the programme. When a “Peace Day” held once a year is called a peace education programme it denigrates genuine programmes and makes support for peace education generally more difficult. The same for programmes that are just drama programmes – drama is very good for learners – a good drama programme can help learners to critically analyse, to be creative, to explore emotions and ethics. But it is not necessarily a good peace education programme – it is a good drama programme. Often this type of programme cannot be measured and because they are good things but without structure they are not monitored either. This is how peace education gets a reputation for being “warm and fuzzy”.

In the development of the INEE PEP the components were included through a series of meetings and discussions with the various communities. Over time and across a very wide range of communities and ethnic and religious groups, it became obvious that as human beings we are more similar than we are different and that we see the similar responses to similar problems. Meeting after meeting was asked what the greatest problems causing conflict were. Groups were then asked what they wanted their children to learn that would minimise or eliminate these problems. Thus a series of webs like this one were developed. One response (such as listening) was in the centre and then, through discussion, other connecting concepts or topics were linked. In this way the curriculum topics were developed. While there are slight differences between the formal school curriculum and the non-formal community curriculum, they are essentially the same. Non-formal programmes include emotional honesty and only the upper primary and secondary programmes do the theory of peace and conflict.



Topic	
Peace and Conflict (including conflict theory)	Bias, Stereotypes, Prejudice and Discrimination
Similarities and Differences	Empathy
Inclusion and Exclusion	Co-operation
Trust	Assertiveness
Active listening	Problem Solving
Communication - 1 and 2 way communication, miscommunication	Negotiation
Emotions (including emotional honesty)	Mediation
Perceptions	Conflict Management (and real life problem solving)
Reconciliation	Human Rights

Most programmes that were developed around the same time that the INEE PEP was developed, worked almost exclusively on communication and co-operation. There was a built in assumption that then learners would know which communication skills to use and that they would automatically trust, be emotionally honest and empathise

- ### Topics in the INEE PEP
- Peace and Conflict (including conflict theory)
  - Similarities and Differences
  - Inclusion and Exclusion
  - Active listening
  - Communication - 1 and 2 way communication, miscommunication
  - Perceptions
  - Empathy
  - Emotions (including emotional honesty)
  - Trust
  - Bias, Stereotypes, Prejudice and Discrimination
  - Co-operation
  - Assertiveness
  - Problem Solving
  - Negotiation
  - Mediation
  - Conflict Management (and real life problem solving)
  - Reconciliation
  - Human Rights

with the other person. This has been proven to be simply not so. Even now, there are many programmes which seem to work on the philosophy that obedience will create peace. But there is a long list of countries and power-brokers who demanded obedience (sometimes even calling it peace) because 'peace' has been interpreted as 'silence' or "not rocking the boat". What we should be teaching our children is respect for others and then the actual skills of peacemaking, including problem solving - to simply trust that others will make peace for you is not constructive as it contains the power in the hands of a few – and we know what happens then!

A good and effective peace education programme will have a comprehensive range of topics or concept areas and these will interlink and build on each other so that the learner has a structured learning experience with all the component parts included.

An effective peace education programme is structured and rights-based. Peace education is about living human rights. It is hypocritical to attempt to teach this without it being rights-based. Rights-based means that the curriculum should be interactive and participatory – a situation where the learner is genuinely a partner in his/her own learning. I have witnessed teachers who have lectured for a full lesson and who assure me that the lesson was participatory because the learner copied the exercises from the blackboard. This is not participation – participation is when the learner can openly question, build on theories, discuss with both peers and the teacher without fear of retribution for opinions expressed. It also means that the learner explores situations and discovers the learning for themselves. This has a double advantage: it is rights-based and therefore psychologically constructive and the learning is internalised so that there is not as much revision that needs to be done – a real bonus for teachers.

### Lessons Learned in Curriculum 3

- Peace education curriculum must be structured and rights-based
- There must be constancy and consistency of approach

Together with the structure is constancy and consistency. The best behaviour change programmes (and these include HIV/AIDS programmes, environmental awareness, landmine awareness, sexual and reproductive health programmes and so on) are implemented consistently: in exactly the same way that maths is taught. Regular lessons that build on each other and are close enough in time so that learners can link the discussions and activities. There is another element of consistency that belongs more in the implementation of a programme. But to mention it briefly: the consistency of the teacher and school in terms of behaviour matching the lessons they are teaching. Any inconsistency between the



teacher's behaviour and the skills and knowledge being taught will be recognised immediately by the learner and the whole message of peace education devalued as a result.

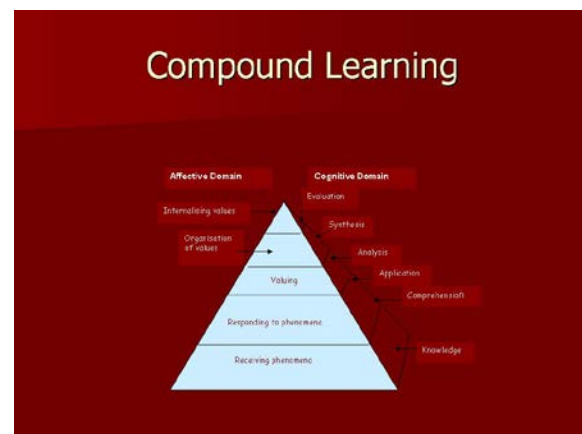
## Lessons of methodology

One of the key points about methodology in relation to peace education programmes is that it is inextricably linked to the content. It is difficult in practice to separate the content and the methodology in any subject areas; but it is possible to teach the knowledge and skills of mathematics or language using several different methods – in fact it is often recommended to use a variety of methodologies. But in behaviour change programmes of any kind the methodology is not just inter-linked to the content, it will mean the difference between a successful programme and one that fails to change the behaviour. For example; it is not necessary to care about mathematics in order to teach it (although it will make for better teaching) but it is necessary to care about constructive and peaceful behaviour in order to teach peace education.

### Lessons in Methodology

- Methodology and content are inextricably inter-linked
- Methodology must be able to respond to multiple domains of learning (cognitive, emotional/affective and ethical)
- Methodology should be rights-based and inter-active

A behaviour change programme relies on compound learning. For example, it is possible to learn to read using simple learning (knowledge and skill acquisition using the intellectual domain). However research – a skill that requires reading, is a compound



## Cognitive (Intellectual) Domain

**Knowledge:** any question where the answer is a fact from the information given

**Comprehension:** where the learner understands the information and can relay it back with meaning. (a retelling or internalising of information)

**Application:** where the learner can apply the information to a different situation

**Analysis:** where the learner can 'take the information apart' and see the principle behind the information

**Synthesis:** where the learner can put the information together in a way that a new outcome can be seen

**Evaluation:** where the learner makes a judgment about the information and can then internalise the full knowledge and understanding.

skill that takes many of us until post-graduate study to really learn. This is because research requires the simple level of knowledge and skill involved in reading and comprehending information, but then it also requires the complex cognitive or intellectual skill of analysing information (is this the correct information for this

research?) and then synthesising a wide range of information to make a

particular point. This breaking down of information and then “putting the pieces back together” – to create new areas of thought or conclusions is a very complex set of skills and they take many years to learn effectively. Then research also requires a willingness to absorb unfamiliar or even distressing information and to evaluate it in the context of the overall research. This is an emotional or affective domain. Peace education programmes require not just the cognitive components, but also the emotional and ethical components. Behaviours and attitudes are formed through development of values and values development relies on the interaction of the affective and ethical domains.

The single most important lesson learned in all the time working in this area, is this one of methodology and the fact that it must respond to the complexity of the learning. This is perhaps why effective peace educations are so rare. It takes a lot of effort from the education system and the teacher to ensure that programming responds to three different but linked domains of learning. Many education systems around the world have traditionally left the synthesising of these three domains to the individual with predictable results.

### Affective Domain

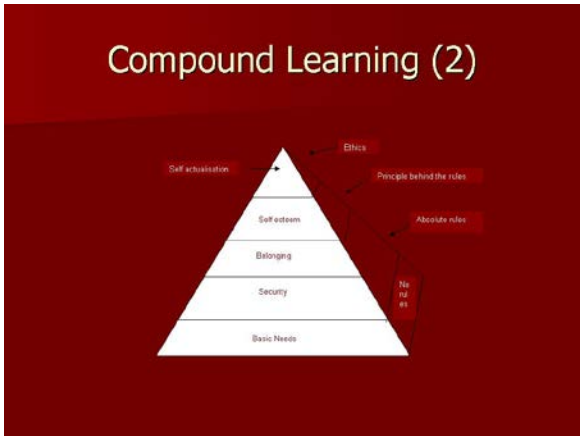
**Receiving Phenomena:** Receives information willingly (wants to learn). The information does not have to be transmitted formally.

**Responding to Phenomena:** Interacts with the information through reasoned discussion and questions, to build new information.

**Valuing:** Can explain the new information and justify it and associate other related knowledge to make a valid value judgment.

**Organisation of values:** Makes links between different pieces of knowledge and associated values and prioritises the new information together with previous information.

**Internalising values:** Recognises value-laden information (and manipulation) and applies new value- information into behaviour.



### Ethical Development

“No ‘rules’”: Where there is no understanding of the rules of society and therefore no adherence of the ‘rules’ [e.g. small children and family meals].

“Absolute ‘rules’”: When the rules are viewed as absolute – and therefore there is no room for interpretation and in parallel, the rules are ‘tested’ to see if they can be broken.

Principles behind the ‘rules’: When people understand why the rule exists and so know which parts they can change or modify but still keep the principle. [e.g. going through the red light at 2.00am after checking that there really are no other cars].

Ethics: When a person behaves well, not because of fear or because somebody is watching – but because it is the right thing to do. And they behave this way consistently.

There are two apparently distinct (and opposite) schools of thought about the methodology of teaching peace education. The most discussed and quoted is the use of a rights-based approach. This is where all the elements and principles of human rights are reflected in the way the teaching is done. Respect for the learner, ensuring that the learner's dignity is maintained means that abusive language, corporal punishment, marginalising of some learners cannot occur. But more than that it means including the learner is decisions about learning, showing respect for the learning process and encouraging the learner to learn independently.

## Rights-based Approach

- Respect for the learner (includes the learner's background, what the learner brings to the situation, and the specific needs of the learner)
- Inter-active so that the learner has a chance to internalise the concepts
- Open and participatory; acknowledging the dignity of the learner
- Reflecting the basic principles of human rights; protection, equality, freedom, respect and dignity.

The second school of thought maintains that the methodology does not matter at all and can be the same as for all other learning. And the confusion is not because these two things are actually radically different but because in this day and age where we live in the global village; context changes, but we do not take this into account. Those that maintain that a different methodology is unnecessary are invariably from wealthy countries that have a long history of inter-active teaching and learning with well-resourced classrooms that encourage independent learning and highly-trained teachers. They usually have an open curriculum where the learner already has a lot of choice about study topics and learning. In this context, the "ordinary methodology" is essentially rights-based and so there is no need to change it. But in a situation where there is a lot of pressure on teachers because they are under-resourced, perhaps under-trained and under-paid and where classrooms are overcrowded, then the teacher will often use the easiest method of teaching rather than the most effective. In this situation, teachers need to be trained and encouraged to understand how to implement a rights-based approach and the education system must be in a position to support such a methodology.

The really interesting thing in my own experience is that once teachers are practised in using a rights-based inter-active approach (which was used only for teaching peace education at the time) they realised that this methodology was very effective and the classroom discipline was much easier than previously and so they proceeded to transfer the teaching methodology to other subjects.

## Lessons in implementation

There are three major forms of implementation in use. Each of them has advantages and disadvantages although some are promoted as if they are the only right way.

*Separate subject approach:* this is the easiest one to implement but the least popular as it is seen as too difficult and time consuming. It should be noted that a separate subject approach does not mean that peace education is not integrated into the curriculum; it is but in the same way that all other subjects in the curriculum are integrated – as individual subjects but within an overall framework of cross-referencing and mutual reinforcement.

The advantages include ensuring that every class actually receives regular structured peace education lessons. The subject can be in parallel and cross-referenced to traditional subjects but focuses the learner's awareness on the fact that they are building constructive skills for living and peace-making. It is generally easier to train the teachers when they can concentrate on the content and method without having to worry about how they will integrate. The disadvantages include time and space in the timetable to squeeze in another subject and the lack of understanding about the level of integration.

*Integrated approach:* this is the most popular but across the world is the least effective. Part of the reason for the lack of effectiveness is that too often teachers are not specifically trained in either the content or methodology. In addition they are often given total responsibility with little guidance as to how and when and where integration should take place. A total integration means that structure is lost as peace education tends to be taught reactively. For the learners, an integrated approach means that there is no focus or mind-set so often the learners are not aware that they are learning or why they are learning certain things. For example, in a previous generation, one of the ways of teaching constructive life skills was to tell stories of the lives of famous and honourable people – lives of the saints or peace-makers. But the learners were never really made aware as to why they were learning these histories – there was no link made between the story and the

### Lessons in Implementation: forms of implementation

- Separate subject approach
- Integrated subject approach
- Co-curricular approach

### Lessons in Implementation

Form of implementation requires:

- Creation of a mindset or focus from the learner
- Teaching needs to be pro-active not reactive
- There must be a logical structure of concepts and topics to provide "building blocks" of learning

principles of a constructive peace-making life. It is the lack of these links that make integrated programmes less effective than they should be.

*Extra-curricular/co-curricular approach:* this approach is the least effective and the least responsible. This is when the programme is effectively offered outside school hours and it is not obligatory. If peace education is considered to be important or vital to the well-being of learners and the society, then it is not logical to offer it after school hours as this effectively tells the learners that the subject is not important. Generally the statistics of attendance of after-school activities shows that approximately 5% of learners attend. However, if the extra-curricula approach is used during pilot periods when materials are being tested this can be very effective. It also serves to create interest among learners but it must be enlarged and legitimatised by being offered during regular school programming.

Of all the programmes viewed and analysed over the decade, the single most effective have been where peace education is offered as a separate subject or when it is part of just one subject (for example social science or moral education). This is because a mindset can be created and the structure and consistency can be assured. The least effective are those that use an integrated approach. Not necessarily because integration itself is so bad – philosophically an integrated approach which promotes holistic learning is considered to be educationally superb. The real problem is that teachers are generally not trained in curriculum development or structure and so to ask teachers to integrate components of one subject into another subject is very difficult. It is also inconsistent to teach one subject reactively and in an oblique way. For example, no teacher would teach mathematics by waiting for a mathematical problem to occur and then working through it. Nor would any teacher teach mathematics by waiting for mathematical principles to arise in language or social science or science lessons. But teachers are often asked to teach peace education this way – completely defying the basic principles of curriculum; which is that structure and a “building block” approach are necessary.

### **Lessons in evaluation**

All behaviour change programmes have great difficulty with evaluation.

Quantitative evaluation (counting the numbers) is probably necessary at least for donors and for records but it does not tell anything about the level of behaviour change that may have taken place. Thus qualitative evaluation is vital – but the type and legitimacy of the qualitative evaluation often reduces the legitimacy of the entire programme.

### **Lessons in Evaluation**

- All behaviour change programmes (BCP) have difficulty in evaluation
- BCP require evidence of application of skills and knowledge and a transfer of these skills and knowledge – impact
- Education generally does not evaluate for this level of impact

Looking at the issue broadly, all of formal education requires a behaviour change. Children are taught skills and knowledge with the expectation that they will apply these and so change or develop particular behaviours. But are these ever really evaluated? The level of knowledge is assessed through tests and examinations and the level of skill may be assessed by asking for formal demonstrations of it – but the application of these, the transfer from the school situation to real life – are these really evaluated?

In most countries the answer to that question is no. At the same time, many people want the question answered in relation to peace education or other non-traditional subjects although they do not require it of traditional subjects. And at some level the question should be both asked and answered.

In the decade that I have been involved, evaluation is the area that has been least developed. Donors (and others) want impact within months from a values development programme when all the developmental psychologists tell us that it takes years to develop and apply constructive values and attitudes (our entire lives for many of us). Qualitative tools are not generally well-regarded – rather they are considered to be subjective – and sometimes they are so that their use has to be carefully planned to overcome that problem. So what are the best answers?

The best programmes have a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators and evaluation tools. How much teacher training, how many teachers, how many children are involved how often peace education is taught, how many pages in the text book - all these questions (or the answers to them) can tell quite a lot about a programme. Equally, unfortunately, even very positive answers to these questions can tell

something that is simply not true. I have seen programmes where a single three hour lecture to teachers is called ‘teacher training’ and every teacher receives it (even if they are sleeping through it) so that box is ticked. The records say that every child receives peace education every day as it is fully integrated into all other subject areas – but if you monitor the teaching there is no evidence of the teaching and absolutely no evidence of learning. There can be no impact from this type of programme however good the quantitative indicators look because there is no real programme being implemented.

So if the best programmes have both quantitative and qualitative indicators what are they?

## Types of Evaluation

- Quantitative and qualitative
- Quantitative: numbers;
  - # Teachers trained
  - # days training
  - # children receiving classes
  - # of resource materials available

Quantitative are basic numbers: how many days training, how many teachers trained, how many learners involved. In addition, there are some indicators that should be included: the number (and type) of informal networks established by teachers to promote peace education or to strengthen their own understanding; number and type of initiatives developed after teacher training or implementation of the programme and number of destructive behaviours in the school or classroom (here the quantitative indicators are looking for a reduction – but of course good records need to be kept of destructive behaviours prior to the implementation of the programme). Tools for gathering this information are usually school records or reports from education authorities. These should be complemented by observations of the learning places to check the validity of the numbers (in the same way that attendance numbers are gathered through reports but checked by observation).

## Types of Evaluation 2

- What could be included to help:
  - # informal networks established by teachers to promote peace education or to strengthen their own understanding;
  - # and type of supplementary initiatives developed
  - # destructive behaviours in the school or classroom (here the quantitative indicators are looking for a reduction)

Qualitative indicators are generally observations and feedback about changed behaviour. As these are generally subjective (one person may see no change at all while another sees dramatic changes and the language used is generally very subjective as well “good behaviour” for example) it is necessary to ensure that they are as objective and valid as possible. Generally the most effective ways of doing this are to have structured observation sheets so that each person observing is looking for the same things and with the same degree of complexity. Feedback through focus discussions and interviews are very strong indicators but especially at the beginning of implementation, structured interview sheets are also a good idea to prevent an interviewer from creating a bias amongst the respondents.

## Types of Qualitative Evaluation

- Observation
  - Structured observation sheets to focus on potential behaviour change
  - Observation needs to be consistent and regular
  - Evaluators need training to use such sheets effectively

## Types of Qualitative Evaluation

- Interviews
  - Require triangulation to be valid: where a range of different people at different levels are asked the same question
  - Require open and honest evaluators to minimise manipulation of information
  - Questions need to be open and not “lead the witness”

Interviews are usually one-on-one discussions. They need structure with particular questions to ensure a consistency of approach. Because they are one-on-one discussions it is vital to have triangulation to ensure that there is no bias. Triangulation simply means asking a variety of people the same question so that you get different perspectives and points of view. For example, if school authorities are asked what makes a quality school they will often respond with examination scores, parents often respond with the look and reputation of the school, teachers might claim it is one where the atmosphere is supportive and students might claim that it is where they like to be. Which one is correct? Only by asking each group and putting together all the views can we really understand. This is triangulation.

It is possible to be objective when asking questions even though it is quite difficult to do. But “leading the witness” is not at all objective and can skew results very badly. It is the difference between asking “what do you think of the way this programme is structured?” or “this programme is a clearly thought out and effective programme isn’t it?” The second one is definitely “leading the witness.”

Focus discussions are simply structured discussions with a small group. One warning however, if there is one very talkative person in the group it is possible to leave the discussion thinking the whole group agreed with a particular viewpoint where in fact it is simply one person’s opinion. The same triangulation approach is needed as in interviews and the same structured objective ‘open’ questions. Focus discussions are often easier and give more information because members of the group add to each other’s insights and comments and so provide a richer and more complex understanding of how the group feels.

Anecdotal feedback is where individuals come to the evaluator and tell their story, preferably without being asked to do so. If they come of their own accord you can be reasonably sure that they are not just telling “pretty stories”. Anecdotal feedback when combined with observation of changed behaviour is extremely powerful evaluation but like all individual approaches it requires a critical mass to be effective. Nobody will

## Types of Qualitative Evaluation

- Focus discussions
  - require trained evaluators so that there is no bias or manipulation of information
  - A cross-section of interviewees should be part of the discussion (or series of discussions)
  - Need to encourage open dialogue
  - Should be consistent in approach

## Types of Qualitative Evaluation

- Anecdotal feedback
  - Should always be unsolicited (not requested)
  - Requires triangulation from others who have observed the changes in behaviour
  - Requires a critical mass to be valid (25 people stating the value of a training is valid whereas 2 people is not)
  - Ideally should be part of a long term case study



continue a programme because one person has constructively changed their behaviour, but if one hundred people change their behaviour then there is a good chance that the programme would be continued.

Evidence of changes in behaviour should include

- reduced violent or abusive behaviour in the classroom and school; between teacher and student and student to student;
- increase in friendships or constructive relationships among learners of different groups;
- inclusion of marginalised groups (including girls);
- increase in critical thinking skills and seeking of confirmation of information to eliminate bias or manipulation of information
- increased clarification of communication (more questions being asked, better comprehension)
- increased ability to solve problems
- increase in willingness to be open and honest
- increased integrity
- increase in moral and ethical values held by the society

Observation or discussion sheets that can delineate these, are not easy to develop and so most programmes use proxy indicators. These are indicators that demonstrate an allied behaviour or function. For example educational quality is very difficult to measure – quality is subjective and many people have very different ideas as to what it is. Education for All (EFA) reports and allied documents use proxy indicators to help establish the idea of quality such as pupil teacher ratio; pupil textbook ratio; length and type of teacher training and so on. None of these things actually reflect quality – they are proxy indicators – quantitative measurements of things generally associated with quality even though they are not actually quality. So proxy indicators in peace education may be the number of times girls answer

### Types of Evaluation 3

Proxy qualitative indicators include:

- reduced violent or abusive behaviour in the classroom and school; between teacher and student and student to student;
- increase in friendships or constructive relationships among learners of different groups;
- inclusion of marginalised groups (including girls);

### Proxy Qualitative Indicators

- increase in critical thinking skills and seeking of confirmation of information to eliminate bias or manipulation of information
- increased clarification of communication (more questions being asked, better comprehension)
- increased ability to solve problems

### Proxy Qualitative Indicators 2

- increase in willingness to be open and honest
- increased integrity
- increase in moral and ethical values held by the society

questions in class – this is not an indicator of equality or inclusion by itself but it is a proxy for a rights-based approach (after all we do not know the complexity of the questions asked of the girls versus the boys nor do we know how the girls responded).

Once the evaluator knows what they are looking for, focus discussions and anecdotal feedback are the most accurate ways to evaluate but they must be supported by a critical mass of evidence: if one person says that there has been a behaviour change in learner X but nobody else agrees then this is not evidence, it is just opinion. But when almost all those who come into contact with learner X report a change in behaviour then this is a critical mass of evidence and can be trusted.

The real key to effective evaluation practices is the same key as effective programming in peace education: it is not that one method or type is better than another and should therefore be used, it is the combination of methods and types so that there is a mutual reinforcement where the strength of one procedure compensates for the weakness of another.

Constant evaluation of the quality and depth discussed in this paper is very rarely possible, not least because of the general scarcity of resources, both human and financial. However, spot checks undertaken using the full range of tools is certainly more effective than total coverage using just one very flawed tool.

So the tools for qualitative evaluation all involve discussion and inter-action. In this sense they too are rights-based as they involve the learner and other stakeholders.

## **Conclusion**

A decade is a long time to learn lessons. Like many other areas of education very often the same lessons have to be learned over and over again. Peace Education is still a new area and is still growing and developing. As long as the principles of respect, equality and dignity are truly adhered to and reflected in all that we do, peace education in the next decade should be able to be consolidated and an integral part of our education systems around the world.

Peace is not an absence of war,  
it is a virtue, a state of mind, a  
disposition for benevolence,  
confidence, justice."

Baruch de Spinoza  
1632 - 1677