

NSI 08 > Call for Contributions

NORRAG Special Issue 08: The role of quality education in building durable, just and sustainable peace

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out an ambitious agenda of transformation, with peace, prosperity, inclusion and social justice at the centre noting that “[w]e are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.” (UN 2015, preamble). The agenda also calls for special attention needed for countries in conflict and post-conflict with a call to redouble efforts to prevent and resolve conflict (Ibid).

Quality education can be a powerful tool in creating social cohesion and fostering more democratic societies. In contexts of crisis and existing conflict, quality education can make an important contribution to peacebuilding and the achievement of sustainable development. In particular, education can tackle inequality, develop future citizens committed to a humanist, collectivist, solidaristic, and equitable value system focused on an inclusive growth and human development paradigm that recognises our mutuality with the natural world.

While there is significant literature on peace education, education for conflict prevention (see [UNESCO IIEP](#)), education for peace, affective education, social-emotional learning, the potential of the ‘triple nexus’ between education, peacebuilding and sustainable development requires further exploration. Too often the potential of peace education in crisis contexts remains disconnected from both policy and practice. This disconnect reduces the contribution that quality equitable education can make in addressing the root causes of conflict whilst supporting sustainable development.

127 million primary and secondary aged children living in countries affected by crisis are currently out of school, almost half of the world’s out-of-school population (INEE, 2020). For the millions of children and young people living in countries affected by crisis, the hope and opportunity for a different future that quality education can offer continues to be denied, reinforcing inter-generational cycles of poverty, crisis and conflict.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which left 1.6 billion students shut out of school at its height (UNESCO, 2020) has layered additional barriers to the education of children and young people affected by conflict and crisis. Lack of access to school during the COVID-19 pandemic in situations of pre-existing crisis, left children and young people vulnerable to increased risk of exploitation and abuse, including reducing incentives and protective measures to prevent them enlisting in the armed forces (The Alliance and INEE, 2021). In the long term, a lack of quality education also reduces lifelong opportunities, increasing poverty and exacerbating inequity, with the potential to fuel tensions. The learning of children who are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which interlocks with other crises and challenges they experience, is most likely to impact adversely on their learning. A key part of the learning that has been neglected during COVID-19 (Sayed et al, 2021) is a focus on the affective, on education that has the potential to support peacebuilding at individual, community, and wider society levels. Teachers are also impacted by crisis and conflict and are crucial to the delivery of equitable and quality education and peacebuilding. Careful attention to the role and agency of teachers in such contexts is vital.

In the above context, this NORRAG Special Issue will look at the role of quality education in creating culture of peace (SDG 4.7) and peacebuilding, from a theoretical, policy and programmatic lens focused and centred on the global South and **organised around six themes:**

1. Deconstructing the notion of peace and quality education for peacebuilding and peace education

This theme will offer a critical analysis of the conceptual, theoretical and philosophical underpinning of the idea of quality education and its role in building durable, just and sustainable peace. In particular we look forward to contributions which critically dissect the idea of peace education, located in epistemologies in and of the South, and offering a reasoned articulation between peace education in and through education and social justice and equity.

2. Exploring how international aid systems for education and peace intersect to support peacebuilding.

Under this theme contributions will examine the international aid architecture in regard to quality education, peace and peacebuilding. Particular attention will be paid to the role of such organisations in peace education and the idea of durable and just peace as discursively represented in the policy, programming, and funding priorities of multilateral agencies, bilateral agency, Bretton Woods institutions, philanthropic organisations, and (I)NGOs.

3. Peace education in national education systems.

SDG 16 on peaceful and just societies and target 4.7 of SDG 4 on education speak specifically about the importance of peace and peace education for ensuring global citizenship, mutual tolerance and respect, and justice. We specifically invite contributions which consider how the idea of a just and durable peace is integrated in national policies in general and in national education policies in particular. We invite contributions that consider the process of policy formulation and implementation and the contestation and conflict that emerged during the policy process with respect to embedding peace and peace education in national systems.

4. Teachers' work and teacher professional development and peace education

Quality education for durable and just peace education relies on competent, motivated, well supported and qualified teachers. Yet, teachers in emergencies and conflict contexts are both victims and perpetrators of violence. This theme invites contributions which consider critically the role of teachers as agents of peace and the conditions and contexts under which they labour. It particularly seeks contributions which consider the professional development support teachers receive in emergencies and crises contexts as well as their sense of 'woundedness' as victims (Sayed et al, DATE).

5. Curriculum – peace education and peacebuilding in the Global South and Global North

A relevant, responsive, and contextualised curriculum that recognises the drivers of conflict and crises as well as building mutual tolerance, respect and understanding is crucial to the transformation of post conflict societies. Yet all too often the curriculum is narrow, limited, ignores the affective, and does not reflect the views of all. In this context, this theme invites critical reflection on positive and negative examples of curricula for durable and just peace. Crucial to this discussion is the role of students, teachers and parents in curriculum development.

6. Pedagogies of peace

Durable and just peace in and through education requires participatory and engaged pedagogies which draw on the backgrounds of learners in teaching and learning. This requires culturally responsive pedagogies that 'better reflect students' lives and cultures' and "the purposes of education in a society that is straining from the problems of anti-Black racism, police brutality, mass incarceration, and economic inequality" (Ladson Biling, 2021, p. 72). For this theme we welcome contributions that speak to and address conflict and other emergencies in ways that protect the idea of education as a common and public good and which critique market-based, neo-liberal and colonial pedagogies.

Contributions across all six themes are encouraged to pay particular attention to the intersection of the themes with gender, race and class. In particular we are looking for contributions which take an intersectional approach to the analysis and writing that shows the complex dynamics between different markers of inequities in different contexts and across time and space.

We especially encourage contributions that across all the themes above consider the difficulties and challenges in transforming education systems. As such, we invite critical reflections on why positive change for peace is difficult to achieve in diverse contexts. We are particularly keen to solicit articles which consider the often unintended and perverse outcomes of education reforms and interventions, focusing on why policies, and programmes do not work as much as they do work, and under what conditions.

We will prioritise a diverse range of contributors across different regions and welcome experienced-based contributions from education practitioners in the field, as well as policy specialists and academics.

The process for authors is as follows:

The contributions are expected to be short written articles (typically around 1,200-1,500 words) or multimedia material that can speak to a wider audience of policymakers, academics, researchers, civil society organizations, and other actors working in the field of education and education in emergencies.

Please submit your abstract before Friday 11 February 2022 to the guest editors **Yusuf Sayed** (y.sayed@sussex.ac.uk) and **Mario Novelli** (M.Novelli@sussex.ac.uk) who will be sharing this role with **Kate Moriarty**.

References

- Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). "I'm here for the hard re-set": Post pandemic pedagogy to preserve our culture. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 54(1), 67–78
- Sayed, Y., Singh, M., Bulgrin, E., Henry, M., Williams, D., Metcalfe, M., Pesambili, J., & Mindano, G. (2021) Teacher support, preparedness and resilience during times of crises and uncertainty: COVID-19 and education in the Global South, *Journal of Education*, 87, 108- 127
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- UNESCO IIEP. <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/our-expertise/crisis-sensitive-educational-planning>