

Introduction

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With the publication of this special issue on peace education in the *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, one might ask why peace education is necessary today. Peace educators around the world might answer by saying that the problems we face in today's world cannot be solved, or rather transformed, unless we change our values, attitudes, and more broadly—our paradigm. To be precise, the present world is filled with values, systems, and politics that are violent towards humans creating cultures of violence. Peace education, recognizing the cultures of violence embedded in world systems as well as in individual lives, was first established after the Second World War in 1945. As people experienced the disastrous and inhumane destruction of global war for the second time in a generation, an international call for peace was issued, and, therefore, the United Nations (UN) was established and began to emphasize a call for educative as well as advocative practices on values that can promote cultures of peace.

The UN and its agencies' assigned charters, constitutions, and declarations on human rights, peace, international understandings, and sustainable development, etc., aim at building peaceful societies. Amongst those, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 1945) concretized the universal idea that "since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of the men that the defense of peace must be constructed." In this regard, peace education highlights the role and the responsibilities of education for individuals, based on the idea that micro social relations are a reflection of macro, and macro relations in turn are the product of the micro level (Haavelsrud 1996). Therefore, Kwon (2015) noted that "the idea behind peace education is of educating individuals to change themselves vis-à-vis peace values and norms—creating a culture of peace in schools which will ultimately lead to the transformation of a society as a whole."

Reflecting on the premise and theory of peace education, research on peace education has three primary frames. First, the research fields are mostly individual schools and school systems (formal education) and also non-formal and/or informal settings where peace education is practiced. The meanings of education include not only developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes for a peaceful society, but also how individuals can be advocative of peaceful values. Hence, the advocative practices of NGOs are also included.

Second, peace education is a universal discourse, yet the form becomes distinct according to each local context. The main issues and blocks to building a culture of peace is different in each context; for instance, peace in Africa and peace in North America necessarily, even intuitively, differ.

Lastly, research on peace education divides roughly into two levels of analysis—macro and micro. That is, research on peace education on the one hand often engages in a political level and/or systems level analysis based on the needs of peace education and how peace education is practiced. While on the other hand, an analysis of peace education may focus on individual educative experiences using subjective and reflexive approaches.

Based on these points, peace education is practiced locally (context-based) but in solidarity with international societies. Therefore, *international solidarity* is very important in achieving peace education. The Global Campaign for Peace Education (GCPE), founded in 1999, is a prime example that embraces the value of international solidarity. GCPE is an international network that promotes peace education among schools, families, and communities to transform cultures of violence into cultures of peace by aiming to achieve two goals: 1) to see peace education integrated into all curricula, community, and family education worldwide; and 2) to promote the education of all teachers to teach for peace.

The International Institute for Peace Education (IIPE) is also a global network working on peace education, and the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) and the Asia-Pacific Peace Research Association (APPRA) also have peace education as a mission and/or a discipline in peace research or peace studies. There are also academic journals focused on peace-related issues, peace studies, or peace research. Among them, the *Journal of Peace Education* has peace education as a primary focus and opens spaces to link theory and research to educational practices, theory, curriculum, and pedagogy. According to the editorial board of the *Journal of Peace Education*, peace education is education for the achievement of non-violent, ecologically sustainable, just, and participatory societies. Therefore it covers areas such as education for/about conflict resolution/transformation, global issues, disarmament, environmental care, ecological sustainability, indigenous peoples, gender equality, anti-discrimination/racism, educational social movements, civic responsibility, human rights, cultural diversity and intercultural understanding, social futures, global citizenship, service learning, teacher professional development, leadership and policymaking,

adult lifelong learning, social justice, mediation/reconciliation, non-violence, and multicultural/intercultural understanding (Journal of Peace Education 2018).

As can be seen from the above, peace education is broad and, in a sense, elusive (Bar-Tal 2002). Peace education differs from context to context, but fundamentally aims to transform the culture of violence embedded in every society towards a culture of peace.

The articles in this special issue on peace education reflect the dimensions mentioned above with more focus on the politics and systems level, giving comprehensive understandings of different contexts and practices of peace education in each context. Therefore, the articles are organized by different peace education forms according to context—societal construction through reforming schools by UN initiatives, governments, and civil societies; international and domestic politics (social disparities) based on religious backgrounds; and democratization and ideological conflict within society. And finally, symbolic concepts of violence and peace (history of war and militarism) reflected in art in different countries are discussed.

The first article by Clive Harber introduces how education for peace—building back better—can transform the violence in schools in sub-Saharan Africa by facilitating critical analysis on how, while this goal is still a difficult task to achieve, it must remain a noble goal for a society to transform violence to peace. Sean Higgins and Mario Novelli also examine potentials and pitfalls of peace education in Sierra Leon by analyzing the “Emerging Issues” teacher education program supported by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF). This is peace education-related curriculum reform, but, according to their analysis, it fails to address structural violence. They focus on teacher agency and content analysis, and also show how the concepts of citizens and teachers are interpreted from the Western European perspective. Next, Vaughn M. John discusses peace education in South Africa by showing how structural, political, and gender-based violence is endemic in South African society and schools, and how it can be transformed through peace education. In this article, peace education advocacies and agents from the state-level to NGOs are introduced and the authors suggest that peace education offered by civil society contributes to creative, people-led peace building in a challenging context. This gives hope that violence can be transformed.

The next part of this issue focuses on how international politics as well as domestic politics create and/or construct socio-political cleavage. Zvi Bekerman analyzes the case of Jews and Palestinians in Israel. The separation of these two groups in Israel is embedded in a long history of dispute (in terms of faith and political relations with Western societies) and it is, according to Bekerman, unresolved. This unresolved conflict brought about separatist policies that are visible in residential and educational arrangements—an unequal society. He suggests several educational models that aim to resolve conflict and generate

peace and concludes discussing the urgent needs of peace and coexistence education.

Zahid Shahab Ahmed analyzes the U.S.-led international agenda of the “War on Terror” influences in an Islamic context. His case study explores how some Islamic seminaries (*madrassas*) link to violent extremism while at the same time international initiatives have pinpointed *madrassas* as a key educational field to foster peace education in Pakistan. However, his analysis shows that the *madrassas* education system is very different from peace education pedagogy and he suggests the need for critical assessment on the application of peace education in Pakistan.

Conflicts also occur in an ideological manner facing both the Westernization problem as well as international power relations. Sanja Djerasimovic focuses on civic education policy and how it was changed (transferred and reformed) in Serbia. The analysis on policy transfer in Serbian civic education discourse gives a comprehensive idea of how national-level policy making reflects context-dependent needs and issues to attain social cohesion and peace. Soon-Won Kang also introduces ideological conflicts in South Korea and how unification education can play a role in promoting peace in a politically divided society. She analyzes the process of Korean division, the limits and possibility of South Korean unification education in comparison with the peace process, peace policy, and unification education (policy and practices). She suggests considering Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 to create a peaceful environment to overcome negative images of North Korea and its ideology. She argues that unification education, as a form of peace education, can overcome these divisions and identify the root-causes of violence in Korea by moving away from a war footing through nonviolent and peaceful ways.

The final article is international comparative research on curation in “dark museums.” As stated earlier, peace education can be practiced in formal, non-formal, and informal educational settings. The analysis on art as peace education presents diverse forms of peace education. Four authors—Christopher Williams, Huong T. Bui, Kaori Yoshida, and Hae-eun Lee—compare museums in the United Kingdom, Europe (West and East), and Southeast Asia (Cambodia and Vietnam). They show how political violence is reflected in informal curation and representation of images of war, militarism, and related issues. Their article provides tools and checklists to help curators and artists and suggests there needs to be a critical education process in the performing arts which will ultimately lead to critical thinking about images of violence and transform itself towards the ideas of peace.

The special issue on peace education consists of articles from diverse contexts, different key points and issues, and different experiences of peace education in diverse educational sectors. Peace education is urgently needed in this violence-embedded world; peace education can assist with transformation

towards supporting peaceful cultures and societies by establishing new constructs in individuals' minds. Therefore, both sociopolitical analyses and analyses of individuals' experiences of peace and violence are required at the same time. The articles in this issue give holistic, critical, and interdisciplinary ideas of peace education discourse and we hope that it is the beginning of an engaged discussion of peace education that can challenge and expand the field of peace research.

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