

# Education for Conflict Prevention: @PKO Now! No.26

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## Cause of Conflict

"That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed".<sup>1</sup> This is written in the preamble to the UNESCO charter. Unlike natural disasters occurring regardless of human mind and will, armed conflict is obviously a human-made tragedy, and the roots of war exist inside the human mind no matter how massive the armed conflict. Also, the cause of conflict can be a lack of resources, territorial issue, unfairness, jealousy, self-profit, misunderstanding, irrational demand, secrecy, and many others, and these causes are common in conflict at both the personal and national levels.<sup>2</sup> This is why it is important to radiate the culture of peace to prevent conflict.<sup>3</sup>

## Education as a Tool of Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping

Education shall be directed toward the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.<sup>4</sup>

Education must develop the ability to recognize and accept the values which exist in the diversity of individuals, genders, peoples<sup>5</sup>, and cultures and develop the ability to communicate, share and co-operate with others.<sup>6</sup> The citizens of a pluralist society and multicultural world should be able to accept that their interpretation of situations and problems is rooted in their personal lives, in the history of their society, and in their cultural

traditions. Consequently, no individual or group holds the sole answers to problems; for each problem there may be more than one solution. Therefore, people should understand and respect one another and negotiate on an equal footing, with a view toward seeking common ground.<sup>7</sup> Thus education must reinforce personal identity and should encourage the convergence of ideas and solutions that strengthen peace, friendship, and solidarity between individuals and people; it should also develop the ability of non-violent conflict-resolution.<sup>8</sup>

### **Education for Conflict Prevention**

Once armed conflict occurs, it takes a tremendous amount of resources, personnel, and time to resolve it. Furthermore, the longer the conflict and dialogue takes, the more difficult it becomes to resolve it. Therefore, it is the best countermeasure to prevent conflict in advance and to find an agreed solution as soon as possible.<sup>9</sup> There are various educational strategies to prevent conflict, including "International Education", "Peace Education", "Education for Cross-Cultural Understanding", "Human Rights Education", "Education for Sustainable Development", "Disarmament Education", "Education for Conflict Resolution", "Gender Education", and so on.<sup>10</sup> So it is important for people working toward all sorts of education to keep practicing comprehensive approaches for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in the world.<sup>12</sup>

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The Constitution of UNESCO (1946).

<sup>2</sup> Morton Deutsch. (1973). *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Process*, Yale University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Eva Nordland & Betty Reardon. (1994). *Learning Peace: The Promise of Ecological and Cooperation Education*, State University of New York Press, Albany.

<sup>4</sup> The United Nations. (1945). *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 26.

<sup>5</sup> Reardon, A. Betty. (1988). *Comprehensive Peace Education: Education for Global Responsibility*, Teachers College Press.

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO, Section for the Promotion of Rights and Values in Education Division for the Promotion of Basic Education. (2008). *UNESCO 's Work on Education for Peace and Non-Violence: Building Peace Through Education*, Paris.

<sup>7</sup> Johan Galtung. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development, and Civilization*, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo.

<sup>8</sup> Declaration of the 44th session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, October 1994. Endorsed by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 28th session in Paris, November 1995.

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO. (2002). *UNESCO - Mainstreaming The Culture of Peace: the Culture of Peace, Co-ordination of the Bureau of Strategic Planning United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*.

<sup>10</sup> Reardon, A. Betty. (2001). *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*. UNESCO Publishing.

<sup>11</sup> Birgit Brock-Utne. (1989). *Feminist Perspectives on Peace and Peace Education*, The Athene Series, Teachers College Press.

<sup>12</sup> Reardon, A. Betty. & Cabezudo, Alicia. (2001). *Learning to Abolish War: Teaching Toward a Culture of Peace*. Hague Appeal for Peace.