



Peace and Conflict Education around the Globe

Jennifer C. Batton

Abstract

The article provides an overview of the global effort to expand peace and conflict education by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), Peace Education and Conflict Resolution Education reference group, and a regional effort by the Organization of American States (OAS) in the thirty-four countries of the Americas. This article also includes examples of how some of the countries around the globe are operationalizing their work in this area and resources to learn more about these global efforts.

Author Profile

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From Asia to Africa, Europe to the Americas, in all of the world's regions, governmental and non-governmental educational institutions are integrating conflict resolution education (CRE) or peace education (PE) into their policies and educational practices. This article will provide an overview of the global effort to expand peace and conflict education by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) Peace Education and Conflict Resolution Education reference group, and a regional effort by the Organization of American States (OAS) in the thirty-four countries of the Americas.

Peace and Conflict Resolution Education Defined

The terms PE and CRE are defined and operationalized in many different ways around the globe, with some common themes. PE, as defined by UNICEF, is “the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.”¹ This definition ties both CRE and PE together, with the skills of CRE being a central theme. These skills generally include: understanding conflict, understanding how emotions influence conflict, good communication skills and problem solving. Conflict management programs vary in their implementation, but teach valuable life skills, mediation, negotiation and violence prevention strategies.² CRE as defined by the United States' National Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR), models and teaches, in developmentally relevant and culturally appropriate ways, a variety of processes, practices and skills designed to address individual, interpersonal and institutional conflicts, and to create safe and welcoming learning environments. These skills, concepts and values help individuals to understand conflict dynamics, and empower them to use communication and creative thinking to build healthy relationships and to manage and resolve conflicts fairly and non-violently. Conflict Resolution educators envision a

¹ UNICEF, “Peace Education,” http://www.unicef.org/girlseducation/focus_peace_education.html.

² J.C. Batton, et. al., *Managing and Resolving Conflicts Effectively in Schools and Classrooms*, [On-line course]. National Training and Technical Assistance Center for Drug Prevention and School Safety Coordinators of the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug Free Schools Office, (June 2006), http://www.creducation.org/resources/resolving_conflicts/files/index.html.

peaceful and just world where citizens act responsibly and with civility in their interactions and in their dispute resolution processes.³

This definition incorporates themes related to civics, multi-cultural education and social justice, showing their strong compatibility with these other important knowledge and skill sets for youth.

Global Efforts

While many are familiar with the work of the United Nations in peace and conflict education, there are many other organizations working to effect positive change and help governmental and non-governmental organizations build capacity in schools, colleges, universities and communities, for curriculum and skills integration, teacher training and community education. The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is a civil society led network whose mission is to build consensus on peace-building and the prevention of violent conflict in the fifteen world regions it serves. Each region has its own action agenda which was launched at UN headquarters in July of 2005. Based in the Hague, Netherlands, and housed at the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP), the GPPAC assists in “strengthening civil society networks for peace and security by linking local, national, regional, and global levels of action and effective engagement with governments, the UN system and regional organizations.”⁴ One of the target areas of the GPPAC program on Knowledge Generation and Sharing is the work of their Peace Education and Conflict Education Reference Group, a collaborative of experts in CRE and PE from the world’s regions. This reference group, building upon the work of the Policy Meetings of the Inter-American Summit on Conflict Resolution Education (March 2007) in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, and a meeting of the PE Reference Group at a GPPAC meeting (April 2007) in Belgrade, Serbia, identified as a priority, the need for a global survey of PE and CRE research. The survey was to examine the benefits and challenges related to this work, including a review of current evaluations, lessons learned, and improvements needed for evaluation design. The first phase of this project, canvassing the existing evaluation and research, was completed in partnership with nine U.S. colleges and universities, and the University of Peace, Nairobi, the Nansen Dialogue Network, the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), the Department of Education, Victoria (Australia), the Organization of American States (OAS), Seisen University (Japan), the Africa Democracy Forum, Women for Development (Armenia), Miriam College (The Philippines), the Nairobi Peace Initiative and the ECCP. These findings were shared at the Second International Conference on Conflict Resolution Education (March 2007) in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., and a research agenda, identifying

³ Association for Conflict Resolution, “Recommended Guidelines for Effective Conflict Resolution Education Programs in K-12 Classrooms, Schools and School Districts”, http://acrnnet.org/acrlibrary/more.php?id=11_0_1_0_M.

⁴ The European Centre for Conflict Prevention, “The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict,” Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, <http://www.gppac.net/page.php?id=1485>.

and prioritizing gaps, was developed. Phase three, developing and funding CRE and PE evaluation research that addresses identified gaps, was discussed at the next regional meeting in Kenya in 2008.⁵ The details of these efforts and some of the results of the first stages of the evaluation are available on the CRE website.⁶

Regional Efforts

At the Fourth Organization of American States (OAS) Ministers of Education Meeting in August of 2005 in Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministers of Education of the Americas adopted the Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices. This program was to focus its efforts on developing a democratic culture through education in the thirty-four member countries of the Hemisphere. The Program would do this by working on three main areas: research, professional development and educational resources, and information exchange. An Advisory Board for the Program, consisting of renowned experts from across the Hemisphere, was formed, and met in Bogotá, Colombia in April of 2006, to recommend concrete activities in each of the three main areas of the Program. The Program's activities in the past two years have taken these recommendations into account. A large majority of the countries working on democracy and citizenship education, both through formal and non-formal education methods, including the implementation of policies at the country level, incorporate peace education and conflict resolution education knowledge, skills and attitudes as requirements.⁷

These efforts resulted in a number of endeavors. These include the creation of the *Inter-American Journal on Education for Democracy*, the development of two distance learning courses, the *Hemispheric Course on Evaluation of Policies and Programs in Citizenship Education* for governmental and non-governmental organizations responsible for the evaluation of the implementation of these programs in their countries, and a course for teachers in the Caribbean on *Creating Democratic Classrooms*. These efforts also include collaborations on much needed research, resulting in reports such as the *Report on National Policies on Education for Democratic Citizenship Education*, and the development of a web portal of research, resources and information related to these macro-level efforts.⁸

Overview of Country Efforts

⁵ The European Centre for Conflict Prevention, "Knowledge Generation and Sharing", Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, <http://www.gppac.net/page.php?id=1513>

⁶ See the Conflict Resolution Education Connection, "CRE/PE Research Project," http://www.creducation.org/cre/homebase/content_presentations/cre_pe_research_project

⁷ The Organization of American States, "Education and Culture," <http://portal.oas.org/Default.aspx?tabid=239&language=en-US>

⁸ See <http://educadem.oas.org>

All over the globe, countries are working to integrate the various knowledge, skills and structures related to PE and CRE into their legislation, policies, standards and programming, in both formal and informal educational settings, from early childhood to young adults. Below is a summary of related efforts in Armenia, Ghana (West Africa), Israel, Thailand, Ukraine and the United States. These summaries are from presentations these countries made at international conferences on CRE in the U.S., or information submitted by representatives in these countries for the global section of the Conflict Resolution Education Connection Website.⁹

Armenia

In Armenia, over the last 6 years, the NGO Women for Development has been implementing the PE and CRE program, establishing PE centers in schools. This training was developed in the frame of the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence (2000-2010). The program, financed by EED (Germany) and ICCO (the Netherlands), has three main goals, 1) teacher training, 2) organizing various mechanisms of peace education processes in schools, and 3) cooperation with the National Institute of Education, Ministry of Education and Science. These efforts have resulted in special training and peer-to-peer education for approximately 2000 pupils from eighteen schools and the Pedagogical Institute. One of the primary successes was the integration of PE and CRE into the Social Science subjects criteria, national standards, throughout Armenia.¹⁰

Ghana (West Africa)

In 1998, as a response to the several civil wars in the region, and in an effort to help intervene in and prevent conflict situations, representatives of seven West African countries, believing in the strength of collaboration, launched The West African Network for Peace building (WANEP)¹¹ in Accra, Ghana. One of its key efforts is its youth and peace education program. WANEP has been working in seven countries in the West African sub-region to promote conflict resolution programming in schools at two levels: 1) the development of peace education tools such as teachers' guides and resource books, and 2) the development of peer mediation programs in schools. WANEP's work has engaged Ministries of Education in Ghana, Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, resulting in the revision of the education standards in Ghana to include aspects of peace education in five subject areas. The objectives of the youth program include: "1) to increase awareness of non-violent strategies among the youth, 2) to provide a platform for youth involvement in peacebuilding, and 3) to harmonise and strengthen linkages

⁹ For additional details about the work being done in these and other countries around the world, or to contact the contributors, please visit the global section of the website: <http://www.CREducation.org>

¹⁰ Goharik Markosyan, "Effective Methods of CRE in Armenia's Schools." Presented at the Second International Conference on Conflict Resolution Education, Cleveland, Ohio, USA, March 28, 2008, Conflict Resolution Education Connection, http://www.crededucation.org/cre/homebase/content_presentations/cre_in_armenias_schools/

¹¹ Additional information on WANEP's initiatives can be found at: <http://www.wanep.org>

between formal and non-formal education structures in the theory and practice of peace education.”¹²

Israel

In Israel, there are thousands of PE initiatives aimed at students, from early childhood to university. While there is no official set directive or legislation requiring peace education for all students, the Ministry of Education encourages the development and implementation of PE related initiatives. For example, the “Allocation of one study hour per week throughout the education system, from kindergarten through high school” is to be integrated into the subject of life skills, including peace education related topics.¹³ The initiatives are vast and may be divided into two main types: “1) Jewish-Arab encounter programs: ‘mixed’ and bilingual schools, ‘twin’ schools, joint delegations abroad, summer camps, etc., [and] 2) Study and enrichment programs: programs within the education system that deal with education for coexistence and democracy, for multiculturalism, humanism, mediation, etc.”¹⁴ Despite these efforts, research on PE conducted at the University of Haifa found that while, due to the plethora of NGOs and more formalized efforts all Israeli children are exposed in some manner to these topics “only about 6% take part in comprehensive, long-term programs.”¹⁵

While most CRE and PE in Israel focuses on Jewish-Arab relations, other initiatives exist that address conflicts which occur between current residents and new immigrants, and conflicts which exist between the secular and religious segments of society. Some of these initiatives are administered by the Ministry of Education, while others are operated by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and institutes.¹⁶ PE and CRE work is overseen by two departments within the Ministry of Education, one which covers the topics of democracy and civics through cognitive methods, and the Psychological Counseling Service, which addresses the social-emotional aspects of the conflicts, including addressing the trauma associated with the violence. In addition to the governmental agencies, there are an estimated 300 NGOs which are working to address these issues, and the Jewish-Arab coexistence network is working to bring them together.¹⁷

Thailand

¹² Levinia Addae-Mensah, “Ghana,” The Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management, (2005), <http://disputeresolution.ohio.gov/country/ghana.htm>.

¹³ Judy ben Ezra, “Israel,” Conflict Resolution Education Connection, (2007), http://www.creducation.org/cre/world/intl_profile/profile_israel1/

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See <http://www.coexnet.org.il> for more information on these initiatives.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The Ministry of Education is developing a national policy to build a culture of peace in Thai schools at the national level. This initiative also explores positive ways to involve student participation in addressing conflict and violence. These efforts evolved from a policy signed by Thailand's Prime Minister in September of 2003 - Number 187/2003, A Policy to Deal with Conflict by Peaceful Means.¹⁸ The policy's focus is the use of peaceful means to decrease bias and negative attitudes, to stop hate and to solve problems without violence. One of the mechanisms to support this policy implementation is the creation of Institutes of Dispute Resolution at Universities, with a mandate to create a conflict resolution curriculum, to provide on-going training and workshops. These currently include governmental organizations including the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and the Ministry of Education.¹⁹

In November 2005, Thailand's Cabinet approved a policy to encourage all the universities to set up centers and curricula in Conflict Management, and to develop an agency at the national level to oversee dispute reconciliation processes and reconciliation efforts in Thailand. In July of 2006, King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI) organized a meeting to review the Cabinet's policy and to help develop a plan for it. In August of 2006, the Ministry of Justice and KPI organized a meeting to plan how restorative justice practices and school mediation could be used in schools to prevent serious disputes. In 2007, the Ministry of Education, through the Office of the Educational Council, launched a program on Conflict Resolution Education and Peace Education, which ran peer mediation in schools. KPI has helped support these efforts by training school administrators, teachers and students.²⁰

Ukraine

In the Crimean region of the Ukraine, CRE has expanded from 1997 – 2005 as NGOS (the Odessa Mediation Group, the Tavrida Mediation Group, Search for Common Ground Crimean Office, etc.) and government officials partner to conduct training in CRE and mediation, integrate these topics into the civics education course for higher grades and into teacher training and education for school psychologists. An example of these efforts is the integrated course "Culture of Neighbourhood" (including Tatars, Russians, Ukrainians, and other cultural groups), which is a joint initiative of several non-governmental organizations and educational institutions supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Crimea. There are multiple components of this thirty-five hour course in primary, secondary and high schools, including conflict resolution skills, peer mediation, etc. The main purpose of the course is to help prepare children, with key

¹⁸ Available in Thai and English at: <http://disputeresolution.ohio.gov/country/thailand.htm>.

¹⁹ Vatanasapt, Vanchai, "Thailand," The Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management, (2005), <http://disputeresolution.ohio.gov/country/thailand.htm>

²⁰ Vanchai, Vatanasapt, "Country Profiles/Peace Education Context." Second International Conference on Conflict Resolution Education, Cleveland, Ohio, USA, March 28th, 2008, Conflict Resolution Education Connection, http://www.creducation.org/resources/conference/cre_country_profiles_2008.pdf

social skills, to be critical thinkers, and to increase their tolerance and understanding of their diverse communities as they grow up and live in a rich, poly-ethnic environment. As a result of these efforts, the program has gained government support, and has been approved by the Ministry of Education, the body responsible for colleges and universities. In addition, there has been a Decree of Parliament that CRE/PE be integrated into the training for children and future teachers, and included in textbooks.²¹

United States

In the United States, there is no national mandate or requirement to integrate CRE into the curriculum for students. However, there is CRE related legislation in nearly all fifty states and at the federal level.²² Related legislation includes topics such as school safety, violence prevention, character education, mediation and conflict resolution. Legislation, mandates and requirements range from topic integration into social studies standards, to the alignment of the school mission and discipline policy, to teacher training. The challenges to implement these requirements or mandates generally focus on inadequate funding for the training of teachers and students.

In higher education, more than 200 colleges and universities in the United States have ombudspersons²³ with approximately 220 campus mediation programs.²⁴ There are few system-wide comprehensive conflict management programs which require all colleges and universities within a state to have such structures in place. However, the University System of Georgia, the University of Hawaii System, and the University of Missouri System do have such comprehensive programs.

While there are nineteen states that have some form of a state government office on dispute resolution, only Ohio has a state government office that includes an Education Director, with a mission to provide all Ohio public schools (approximately 5,000), colleges and universities (approximately fifty-two teacher training colleges), with grants, training, technical assistance and resources on conflict management. Established in 1989,

²¹ Smirnov, Oleg & Brunova-Kalisetska, Iryna, "The Role of NGOS in Education Reform: Effective Conflict Prevention and Tolerance Building (Ukraine)." Presentation at the Second International Conference on Conflict Resolution Education, Cleveland, Ohio, USA, March 28th, 2008, Conflict Resolution Education Connection, http://www.creducation.org/cre/homebase/content_presentations/the_role_of_ngos_in_education_reform/

²² For additional details related to what states require, visit Georgia State University's Conflict Resolution in Schools Program Legislative Database:<http://law.gsu.edu/area51/crisp/> or the Education Commission of the States overview of legislation in the fifty states and territories: http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/statesTerritories/state_map.htm

²³ An ombudsperson is a representative of a college or university who serves as a neutral third-party, assisting all members of the college or university community to problem-solve and resolve conflicts before they escalate to litigation through the use of coaching, mediation and utilizing other conflict resolution tools.

²⁴ For additional information on CRE and PE Higher Education in the U.S., visit the Campus Conflict Resolution Resource Website at www.campus-adr.org.

the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management provided more than 800 public schools with conflict management training grants for their educators, established truancy mediation programs in more than 415 schools, and helped establish the National Conflict Resolution Education in Teacher Education (CRETE) Project funded by the United States Department of Education, the George Gund Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the JAMS Foundation. With twelve college and university partners across the United States, CRETE's goals are to help higher education faculty infuse Conflict Resolution Education into their existing courses for pre-service teachers; develop an external training program in CRE for pre-service teachers and mentor teachers; evaluate the impact of CRETE on teacher satisfaction and retention; and develop web-based and hard copy instructional materials and protocols.²⁵

Summary

All around the world, governmental and non-governmental organizations are building capacity in CRE and PE through large scale teacher and school administration training efforts, curriculum integration, creation of resources, and education related policy and standards development. Due to space constraints, only a few country efforts were detailed in this paper.²⁶

As these efforts expand, evaluation is critical to seeing the programs achieve their intended goals. The GPPAC's efforts to collect and analyze these global efforts, and the OAS's efforts to better prepare those responsible for these large scale evaluation endeavors through the development of an on-line evaluation course, have the potential to provide much needed technical assistance and information to governments and non-governmental organizations as they work to promote peace and reduce conflict in their communities.

²⁵ T. Jones, C. Salkowski, A. Mercer & W. Warters, "Conflict Resolution Education in Teacher Education: Expanding CRE Programs & Resources," Presented at the Sustaining Conflict Resolution Education: Building Bridges to the Future Conference, Fairfax, Virginia, USA, March 10, 2008, Conflict Resolution Education Connection,
http://www.creeducation.org/cre/homebase/content_presentations/crete_overview_march_2008/
These materials are available at no charge through the Conflict Resolution Education Connection Website, www.CREducation.org

²⁶ Readers are encouraged to visit the global section of the Conflict Resolution Connections Website at www.CREducation.org to review other regional and state efforts, and to share information on relevant CRE and PE efforts in their own country or region.

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