



**EDUCATION FOR
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**

Cover photo: Mine risk education, Afghanistan, ICRC.

EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

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FOREWORD

This book has been prepared by a group of practitioners and thematic specialists who work in the field of education for citizenship, peace, human rights, humanitarian law, teaching about the past and education planning. Many have experience in countries which are “fragile” or face conflict or the risk of its recurrence, or have worked on education of refugees. Often they have worked in situations where there are few material resources in the schools and where teachers have limited education and training.

The authors confirm that, given a policy commitment and capacity building, education for citizenship and associated themes CAN be done even in difficult circumstances and with limited resources. This is an important finding for a number of actors in the field of educational policy, planning and donor assistance. Currently there are international initiatives being designed and implemented to promote education and peacebuilding, education as a response to fragility, and education as a tool to promote justice and peace, as well to develop post-2015 education development goals. At national level, governments may welcome the contribution of education to promoting constructive citizenship and peace.

Education Above All (EAA) is pleased to present this study to education policymakers at international and national level, at a time when the UN Secretary General in his Global Education Initiative is calling for education that fosters “Global Citizenship”. Learning experiences that prepare students for responsible citizenship at local, national and global levels are an essential part of quality education. The programmatic and thematic “briefs” collected here will likewise contribute to the ongoing policy dialogue on how education can better support social cohesion, peacebuilding and state-building. They are thus relevant to implementing the Secretary General’s Initiative, and to ongoing programmes supportive of “education and peacebuilding” (including the new UNICEF programme) and education development in fragile states (including the new approaches being adopted by the Global Partnership for Education).

I would like to express my thanks to the 18 authoritative contributors for giving their time and expertise to prepare briefs on some aspects of their respective fields. Their willingness to make these contributions at short notice is much ap-

PART TWO

PROGRAMMATIC AND THEMATIC BRIEFS

SECTION C. PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

10. Peace education can make a difference in Afghanistan: the Help The Afghan Children initiative (Suraya Sadeed)
11. Skills and values based education to foster a culture of peace and non-violence (Katrien Beeckman)
12. Development of the INEE Peace Education Programme (Pamela Baxter)
13. Teaching peace education in Muslim societies (Qamar-ul Huda)



SECTION C. PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

10. Peace education can make a difference in Afghanistan (Suraya Sadeed)

In chapter 10, Suraya Sadeed describes her work for peace education in Afghanistan. As a first step, Help the Afghan Children (HTAC) developed a story book comprising multiple episodes of the responses of an Afghan family to the hardships of war. Teachers participate in a five-day intensive workshop to learn how to use these stories to generate participative learning in the classroom to engage students' interest and commitment. Hand puppets are also used to hold students' attention and so that views can be expressed more freely through attribution to the puppets. HTAC currently works with students in years 7-8 of schooling and is developing materials to cover all secondary school students, if funding is available.

About the author

Suraya Sadeed was born and raised in Kabul, Afghanistan, immigrated to the United States in 1982 and became a successful business woman. During the height of the Afghan Civil War (1993), Suraya returned to Afghanistan and established a non-profit organization, *Help the Afghan Children, Inc.*, of which she is Executive Director. Since then, Suraya's efforts in providing education and humanitarian aid, in some of the most inhospitable conditions, have directly benefited an estimated 1.7 million Afghan children and their families. Her memoir, *Forbidden Lessons in a Kabul Guesthouse*, was recently published in difference languages in the U.S. and Europe. The author believes that "Providing peace education to schools is a preventative strategy that helps break the cycle of violence and conflict in war torn countries like Afghanistan." For more information see www.htac.org

The challenge: teaching Afghan children to reject violence and embrace peaceful behaviors

For over 30 years, Afghan children have been the innocent victims of a never-ending cycle of violence and conflict from the Soviet invasion and occupation, through the Afghan civil war, the rule of the Taliban and its overthrow up to and including the fierce fighting between NATO and Afghan forces and the resurgent Taliban. These decades of continuous war have not only resulted in millions of casualties, but have also bred a culture of violence and aggression that extends well beyond the battlefields and into communities, schools and even homes.

Studies by McMaster University's Center for Peace Studies (Hamilton, Ontario), who have conducted some of the most comprehensive research on the psychological impact that violence has on Afghan children, have shown that 60%-70% of today's Afghan children were exposed to violence in some way and continue to have great difficulty coping with everyday living; many of them are reluctant to seek comfort even from a previously trusted adult, including their parents. Many of these children are exposed to violence in their homes or corporal punishment practices in the schools they attend. Exposure to or becoming a victim of violence not only affects children's attitudes and their ability to learn, but often prevents them from developing emotional awareness, self-esteem, empathy, and active problem-solving, - tools that would serve them well as adults.

In countries like Afghanistan, where people have had prolonged exposures to conflict, the problem has serious implications; not just for children, but families and entire communities. When children feel threatened or victimized, they begin to accept and expect violence as the norm; especially among young boys. They begin resorting to aggressive behavior whenever they are unable to resolve their differences. Left unchecked, many of these children will grow up believing that violence is the only solution to coping and will become highly vulnerable to extremist viewpoints and groups.

A viable solution – peace education

Help the Afghan Children (HTAC), a non-profit, non-governmental organization active in Afghanistan since 1993, has long believed that a critical, yet missing strategy in securing lasting peace in that country is to address the root causes of violence and to educate a new generation of Afghans who will reject violence, embrace the principles of peaceful everyday living, and work hard as

they become adults to break this vicious cycle. While conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives are not new to Afghanistan, providing formal peace education courses for Afghan school children represented a bold, innovative learning approach that HTAC began in late 2002 and has continuously expanded and improved upon over the past ten years. To date, HTAC's peace education program has reached over 54,000 students at 44 schools in five Afghan provinces.

Peace education has produced highly encouraging results

With each new implementation of peace education into Afghan schools, teachers, school administrators, parents, and trained observers are reporting significant and sustained measurable improvements in applied learning and behavior among students; especially among boys. For students exposed to peace education, there is often a dramatic reduction in observed aggressive behavior (i.e. fighting, bullying, harassing) among students of up to 70% in the first year alone. Equally dramatic has been the increase in percentage of students consistently modeling peaceful, positive behaviors of up to 85%. In one province where the program was initiated, chronic fighting and harassment among three (competing) ethnic groups of students virtually ceased altogether, and was replaced with friendships between these same groups of students that continued to flourish even after the initial year.

Conversely, comprehensive peace education teacher training and coaching has reduced counter-productive corporal punishment practices (among teachers) to almost zero. Parents of enrolled school children report significant positive changes in students' behavior in the home where once-volatile or uncooperative children are demonstrating respect for elders and siblings, an increased desire to communicate, to be part of the family unit, and demonstrating greater cooperation regarding chores and other responsibilities. Local adult community committees that have been exposed to peace education tend to be overwhelmingly supportive of the continuation of these initiatives as well.

HTAC's peace education model

HTAC's peace education is a psychosocial program with six key learning objectives: (1) providing tools to help children better cope with the emotional trauma many of them suffer from previous or current exposure to violence; (2) teaching children the basic concepts of peaceful everyday living, including the art of non-violent conflict resolution to resolve differences; (3) teaching children to accept and respect individual, religious, ethnic, and gender differences; (4) training teachers to role model peace education concepts in the classroom; (5) providing realistic activities for children where they can apply peace education principles learned in class; and (6) working with parents and local communities to support and reinforce peace education principles in the home.

A major part of the curriculum is built around a series of original, illustrated, trilingual (Dari, Pashto, and English), "Journey of Peace" storybooks¹. These books feature realistic healing stories about Afghan children and their families that help children deal with the emotions and consequences of anger, fear, fighting, and sadness while embracing other qualities such as: patience, apologizing, sympathy, bravery, mediation, and satisfaction.

Not only are these peace stories read and discussed in class, but students also learn to act out and role model the lessons from the stories using puppets and participating in mini-theaters. Aggressive students are often selected and given the role of mediators so they learn the valuable lessons and benefits of non-conflict problem-solving. Shy, withdrawn students are sometimes asked to play the roles of more outspoken characters in order to improve their confidence and self-esteem.

A second part of the program involves the physical venue of teaching and learning about peace. All participating schools (where the program is delivered), have peace rooms or peace centers, which are welcoming, stimulating, and safe places for students to learn, share their opinions and feelings, and engage in exercises that promote cooperation with others and problem solving. HTAC learned, early-on, that the traditional classroom environment (with

¹ The story outlines and a sample text in English are available on www.htac.org

the teacher as authority figure and students not able to see and communicate with one another), actually prohibited learning and practicing the principles of peace; hence the creation of a new setting where students sit around a large table and openly discuss lessons and assignments while the teacher acts more as a group facilitator. Peace rooms also function as neutral places where students can come and work out their conflicts under the guidance of their teacher or trained student peer mediator.

HTAC-trained peace education teachers are required to complete a vigorous program where they learn about the concepts, principles and approaches to teaching peace to children. Part of the training involves acquiring critical skills in modeling positive behaviors both in and out of the classroom; learning the techniques of non-violent conflict resolution; and developing effective communication skills to assist parents to reinforce the principles of peaceful everyday living in their homes. HTAC peace education parental guides serve as a useful tool that describes what their children learn (about peace) and helpful ideas for parents in discussing these values with their children.

As a third major component, HTAC establishes local community school committees (comprised of recognized community leaders, elders, parents of children, teachers, and other citizens), to educate and empower them in supporting peace education beyond the schools and in the communities themselves, using many of the same principles and tools their children learn at school. Through this process, adults learn to embrace peace-related activities in resolving their own conflicts and reject violence and other forms of aggressive behaviors, like their sons and daughters.

HTAC measures and evaluates how effectively students are able to learn and apply peace education principles by utilizing a series of field-tested performance measures and goals where data on specific observable behaviors is continuously tracked, recorded, and reported. While attitudinal surveys bring added value to the overall process, measuring actual changes in behavior over time (e.g., the average number of aggressive conflicts per month at a given school through independent observations) provides an abundance of rich data that not only reflects how successful peace education efforts are, but also identifies those areas of the program where improvement is necessary.