Peace Education in a Country in Crisis: A Case Study of Primary School Curriculum in Syria

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To reach peace we need to teach peace.
(Weiss, 2003: 127)
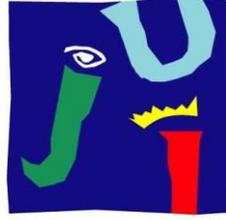
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Peace Education in a Country in Crisis: A Case Study of Primary School Curriculum in Syria

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Abstract

This research focuses on the effects of Peace Education in promoting a culture of peace in countries in crisis. The research provides an overview of the general condition of education in the Arab world and highlights the obstacles and challenges. Then it narrows to a more in-depth study by choosing two case studies from Syria. The study helps us better understand the need for an educational program using Peace Education to influence and encourage peaceful approaches and create a more peaceful future. This study demonstrates the need for holistic and empowering curricula to support students' needs and equip them with the required skills to address day to day challenges of the current situation.

The research methodology is based on primary and secondary sources, including interviews with key figures working in the field and academic references. The research investigates the educational system in Syria, highlights challenges, and provides recommendations. It recommends several practical tools to enable teachers to identify peace values in the subjects and implement classroom activities. The main conclusion is that Peace Education can be integrated into a primary school curriculum and pedagogy at all levels. Teachers, school management, parents, education leaders, and the Ministry of Education need to communicate and cooperate to reach this goal.

Keywords: Conflict, Culture of Peace, Imperfect Peace, Curriculum, Peace Education, Syria.

To My Country, Syria

To see "The silver lining in the dark cloud."
William Blake (in UNESCO, 2001: 64)

To my mother

The teacher, and the torch that
always lights up my life,
the beacon that has educated
and paved the road for many
generations.

To my father

Who shows me the practical
perspective of life,
and encourages me to reach my
full potential.

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List of Abbreviations

BiH: Bosnia and Herzegovina

DRC: The Danish Refugee Council

ECHO: European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

EFP: Education for Peace

ICTs: Information and Communication Technologies

MENA: The Middle East and North Africa

NRC: The Norwegian Refugee Council

OOSCI: Out-of-School Children Initiative

TOT: Training of Teachers

UN: The United Nations

UNDP: The United Nations Development Program

UNESCWA: The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

UNFPA: The United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: The United Nations Children's Fund

UNRWA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees

WEF: The World Education Forum

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Introduction

Figure 1 Old Damascus[1]

I wish I could lend you my eyes to see my country's uniqueness.

The Author

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[1]Syrian Ministry of Tourism (2016), *Old Damascus*, Syria, http://www.syriatourism.org/ar/page81/مدينة_دمشق_القديمة, 30 November 2022.

1. General Introduction:

1.1 Research Problem and Justification:

Facing its twelfth year, the conflict in Syria has profoundly affected the country with the proloonged humanitarian crises leaving a deep mark on Syria and the Middle East for the long term. These crises continue to have a profound impact on people. Their lives have changed, as has everything else. The crisis in Syria has caused 5.6 million refugees in the host countries, mainly in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and other (North Africa) (UNHCR, 2022: 1). There are about 6.9 million internally displaced persons in Syria as of early 2022 (Qaddour and Husain, 2022: 7). It has dramatically affected all sectors in the country, including the education sector.

The country is on the verge of losing a whole generation, a generation who knows more about weapons than toys and more about difficulties than fun. The violence, sadness, and depressing atmosphere become evident in all the schools. In this crisis, we are not only losing the present, but we are also losing the future. This generation of Syrian children has been exposed to abuse, trauma, violence, and exploitation. Recent studies demonstrate that there are more than 2.4 million out-of-school children (Qaddour and Husain, 2022: 7), and 1.6 million children at risk of dropping out of school (Save the Children, 2022: 1). These children are facing many risks such as child marriage and child labour (UNICEF, 2022b: 7). The future of a whole generation is at risk requiring urgent action by the national government, the international community, and civil society.

A generation of children has lost the chance to receive a quality education. Many schools were forced to close due to the conflict, "only one-third of schools in Syria are fully functional" (Qaddour and Husain, 2022: 7). Unfortunately, Syria now has the second-worst school attendance rate in the world. Children in northern Syria were "'rarely' or 'never' able to concentrate in class,"

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more than half the children are easily scared, and 40 percent are frequently unhappy (Save the Children, 2014: 11).

Children who are refugees who manage to enroll in schools face further challenges. They are in a new environment studying new curricula without sufficient guidance. Besides that, many of them have to pay the transportation and other schooling expenses their parents cannot afford. Save the Children's Regional Director Roger Hearn said, "It is no surprise that, under these conditions, Syrian children are dropping out of school by the day, and the international community has to step up its response to ensure that we do not lose an entire generation of children" (Save the Children, 2014b: 2).

The big picture of the catastrophic results cannot be explained in a few pages. Therefore, in this research, I focus on one problem angle. This study will focus on children whose schools are in relatively safe areas and still attend formal education. These children have witnessed and experienced violence daily. Their regular school days are full of stress and pressure. Classes are overcrowded due to the significant number of displaced families. Students increasingly are becoming more aggressive and inclined towards conflict. Many children refuse to "walk to school or sit in classrooms for extended periods" (Save the Children, 2014: 4). Children are struggling with many difficulties produced by the crisis.

Education has always formed an essential part of my life. The primary influence for choosing this topic came from work experience and family. I come from a family that works in the education sector as they consider education a vital tool in developing individuals and society. I taught orphans aged 8 to 17 and visually impaired students between 15 and 51 years old in Damascus for many years. This was the most rewarding and fulfilling experience of my life. I learned that education gives insight, hope, new visions, positive thinking, and social skills. I

worked with people who are refugees in and from different countries for many years as well. My interactions with people from different cultures and backgrounds and living and working in countries in crisis contributed to a new perspective on peace and conflict. In the introduction, there will be information provided about the education system in Syria as a basis to discuss the general and specific objectives for the thesis.

1.2 Objectives of This Study:

All these facts and challenges motivated me to search for methods and solutions that could provide tools for social transformation that lead towards a more peaceful, tolerant, sustainable education and a peaceful culture. Education, especially early childhood education, has a strong effect on children's well-being and their perspectives on many aspects of life, such as the concept of peace and war (Save the Children, 2014: 3). Education empowers learners to be competent, creative, and responsible. Furthermore, education equips citizens with the values, knowledge, skills and attitude that are required for social development and "a more sustainable future" (NCCA, 2018: 7). Students need tools to learn how to cope with the new changes, face daily challenges, and create a peaceful culture. Education for Peace is the first and most important step to replace a culture of violence with a culture of peace. However, it is not an easy process; it requires time and lots of effort, especially on the part of the teachers.

The general objective of this thesis is to research and study the current primary school curriculum to see if it supports Peace Education, to understand the curriculum's current impact on primary school students in their responses to and understanding of the conflict, and to improve the curriculum's implementation by primary school educators.

To reach the general objective, I concentrated on several specific objectives. The following specific underlined points should be investigated to incorporate aspects of Peace Education into the Syrian curriculum:

- Does the Syrian curriculum have any elements that support Peace Education?

- Are curricula relevant to real-life problems in the current situation? Are the curricula providing the needed support and guidance to deal with the current crisis?

- How are the Syrian education system's methods in supporting children affected by the country's crisis?

- What are the psychological impacts on students due to the current situation? And does the education system provide the needed psychological support?

- What is the role of the school system in dealing with children's violence, anger and depression? How do the schools' curriculum and teaching staff support and prepare children to overcome this situation and work toward rebuilding the country?

- Are the teachers prepared to use tools of Peace Education and integrate them into the curriculum?

The curriculum needs to provide children with elements that support the values of peace, such as sympathy, compassion, and inner peace. Components of Peace Education help children use a critical eye to look at the situation from different perspectives. This research will be a stone to pave the way for further exploration to find more effective and powerful tools and more robust methods and content to support peaceful conflict transformation through Peace Education.

1.3 The Research Question:

The main research question guiding my thesis is:

In what ways could the primary school curriculum in Syria be adjusted to integrate elements of Peace Education as a tool to be used by youth for peaceful conflict transformation in the current crisis and beyond?

1.4 Research Structure:

This study provides a first-hand source due to the lack of information and references on this topic. Since the start of the Syrian conflict, conducting in-depth field research to collect information has been challenging. It is hard to gather and present objective, not one-sided, perspective, primary data in conflict-affected contexts. My finding was an outcome of data collected from teachers, youth, students, parents, and figures in the educational sector.

This study is an in-depth review of the learning environment for elementary school students in Syria. It investigates teachers' performance and their effect on children's learning process and needs in addition to the learning environment, curriculum, and studying material. The study provides the theoretical frame of the educational system in Syria and focuses on the practical methods of applying this theatrical frame. It offers academic figures and related authority's insights, suggestions, and current and future plans. The aims are to improve the quality of teaching by integrating Peace Education tools and improve the learning process in a suitable approach to the Syrian context.

The purpose of my research is to discover which, if any, elements of Peace Education are already included in the curriculum in Syria, and what room for adjustment exists within the current curriculum. It examines the specific needs of Syrian primary students and identifies Peace

Education tools that could be effective in the Syrian context. It highlights the positive aspects, obstacles, and gaps in the education system, what is missing and what is needed to deliver a curriculum supporting Peace Education.

Both terms "Peace Education" and "Education for Peace" were used during the research. Both terms are connected. "Peace Education" is a tool to understand the main elements of peace and war, and it goes beyond conflicts and peaceful transformation (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace, 2008: xiii).

> (It is) the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level (Fountain, 1999: 1).

Peace Education is an essential component of *quality basic education.* "Education for Peace EFP" is used when the study discusses the subject in general terms to indicate the type of education that aspires to inculcate the values and behaviours of peace amid students and participants.

The research design is based on literature and practical analysis of the current context. The study uses individual and group interviews, a literature review, and participatory observation. This framework directed the development of the investigation, the data collection and analysis, and the findings through three years of research.

The thesis includes Introduction, five Main Chapters, and a Conclusion. The thesis is divided into two sections; the Literature Review and Theoretical Framework.

The first section includes:

- Chapter One: Peace Studies.

- Chapter Two: Peace Education.

- Chapter Three: Current Situation of Education in the Arab World and Syria.

The second section includes the Field Case Studies of the research (Primary School in Syria and The First Syrian Youth Conference).

This section includes:

- Chapter Four: The Syrian Curriculum: Field Case Studies and the Methodology of Research.
- Chapter Five: Education for Peace & The Primary School Curriculum in Syria: Tools for Peace Education in the Syrian Context.

The thesis concludes with a Conclusion.

My theoretical section was divided into three chapters to make the topic clear to readers. To provide a better understanding of Peace Education, it is crucial to explain its contents and what it consists of. Peace Education is the combination between peace studies and education. Chapter one introduces readers to the field of peace, its meanings, studies, perspectives, its importance at an early stage, and its current situation.

During my research, I found that peace was understood in the negative: The absence of war. Unfortunately, most people confuse positive and negative peace, a culture of peace and a culture of war. Chapter one explains that peace is more than the absence of violence. This chapter builds an understanding of peace and war, imperfect peace, peace studies, and its role in resolving conflict in peaceful nonviolent ways to build a culture of peace. After clarifying what is peace studies in the first chapter, the thesis highlights in chapter two the importance of education and underlines the current situation of education in the Arab world.

Despite the many differences among the Arab States, there are similarities that allow for accurate comparisons. The Arab countries share a common ground of language, media, music, general history and culture, and also, to some degree, similar obstacles and challenges. For

example, in the Arab world, there are many generalized obstacles that are similar across the region, along with country-specific obstacles, that affect education. Owing to the war in Syria, the data on the generalized obstacles such as poverty, child labour, discrimination against girls, early marriage and COVID may not be accurate due to the difficulty of collecting data in conflict. "Poor data management and disaggregation of information per region" has compromised the accuracy of data analysis which has prevented more nuanced assessments of educational trends and needs across Syria (Qaddour and Husain, 2022: 4). However, the studies on these topics made throughout the Arab world by scholars, United Nations and NGOs can be applied to Syria due to the similarity in many areas amongst the Arab States, as long as certain caveats are explained. Underlining these obstacles builds the needed basis for a future in-depth detailed analysis that focuses on the direct challenges experienced by each country separately.

Chapter One discusses Peace Studies and illustrates different perspectives on peace and conflict. The chapter's objective is to provide the first part of the theoretical ground from which the thesis evaluates. It starts drawing the theoretical framework of the importance of Peace Education in building a culture of peace by educating people to become peace agents. The chapter highlights that Peace Studies analyse the causes of conflicts, develop methods for peaceful transformative forms of violence and build a culture of peace. The chapter explains positive and negative peace, demonstrating that positive social peace is a process of many small initiatives and Imperfect Peaces.

Chapter Two explores the nature, history, and aspects of Peace Education. The chapter demonstrates that as education develops all the capacities in individuals to achieve their responsibilities, Peace Education is the soul of education which empowers human values and

supports building peaceful behaviour. Inner peace, social peace, and peace with nature are vital to achieving peace and awareness. The chapter particularly considers that Education of Peace can be integrated into a school curriculum through various techniques. Peace values can be added to the lessons through different methods. Teachers should deliver these values with positive feelings and motivating mechanisms to gain students' attention and make learning an engaging process. Designing an Education for Peace program needs to identify students' needs at individual, school or community, national and global levels. The development of a curriculum is a collective effort, by teachers, parents, and students. Finally, the chapter presents a practical example of integrating Peace Education into the school curriculum through the Education for Peace Program applied in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

Chapter Three provides an overview of the education system in the Arab world and emphasises the importance of early childhood education. In addition, it underlines the importance of a curriculum that equips children with the needed support and skills for a sustainable society at an early age. This chapter sheds light on the steps that have been accomplished in improving education quality and the challenges that prevent reaching the aimed targets, including the tragic effects of the many crises and conflicts in the region during the last decade. The chapter highlights many reasons for not achieving the educational targets, including cultural and economic reasons. The chapter demonstrates that challenges are connected, and each one could be the reason or the result of other challenges.

Chapter four narrows the research from the holistic image in the Arab States to focus on two more in-depth qualitative field case studies in Syria, a Primary school, and The First Youth Forum Conference. It explains the reason and the goals in addition to the final finding and highlights of each study. Furthermore, it provides information about the infrastructure of schools,

the school system, and the Syrian Ministry of Education's recent projects and Future Plans. Moreover, it presents the followed methodology for gathering data in both studies. This chapter aims to shape a complete image of the educational system in Syria and evaluate the theoretical part of the schooling system, including the standards and goals of the Syrian curriculum and if it harmonises with the components of Peace Education.

Chapter five provides the results of two case studies conducted in a primary school over three years 2015, 2018, and 2019 and The First Syrian Youth Conference, which was held in 2018, to underline obstacles from the students' points of view and key figures in the education systems and to highlight possible solutions. The chapter analyses the mechanism for applying the theoretical framework of the schooling system by investigating if the curricula are relevant to real-life problems in the current situation and address the students' psychological and educational needs from schools, teachers, and teachers, and curriculum. In addition, it examines whether the teaching staff is well prepared to support peace elements in the curriculum.

The conclusion summarises the findings and future research. Moreover, it discusses various practical approaches and classroom activities for integrating Peace Education into the Syrian school curriculum.

1.5 Limitations:

A critical research limitation is the shortage of relevant sources about this study's topic. Given the prolonged conflict, few academic publications analyse Syria's schooling system, curriculum and Education for Peace. The object of this study needs in-depth details and real-time data to investigate the primary education system, the principles and the standards of the Syrian curricula, and the teachers' performance. Eventually, it evaluates whether the education system

supports an Education for Peace, including the learning and well-being of children in the country's current situation. Conducting field case studies was the best option to collect the needed data. However, as the case with research carried out in areas of conflict, the security situation was a significant challenge in implementing this study.

Additionally, the research focuses on the data collected in 2015 which needed to be re-collected due to changing developments in the curriculum in 2018. This modification required a follow-up evaluation to analyse this change's positive and negative aspects. Moreover, there were delays due to the COVID-19 Pandemic which paused data collection and class evaluation for more than a year. Specifically, this led to another challenge which was gathering data and conducting participatory observation of the teaching and learning processes. As such, the time period for the research findings were between 2015 and 2021.

1.6 Methodology and Research Methods:

My research methodology of the study was put together based on:

1) Literature review focused on Peace Education and Peace Studies.

 I relied on academic books and articles to build the theoretical ground and investigate the situation of the schooling system in the Arab states.

2) First-hand primary data collection for two case studies took place in Damascus (Syria).

For a deep insight into the Syrian schooling system, data was obtained through qualitative research based on ethnographic fieldwork, including:

I)   Participatory Observation

II)   Interviews

III)   Focus Groups.

Two case studies were undertaken to obtain data close to the processes of teaching and learning.

1- The first case study was established in a primary school in Damascus, Syria, during three field visits in 2015, 2018, and 2019. Additionally, follow-up contact was conducted virtually in 2020 and 2021. The data was collected through:

    a) Interviews with relevant stakeholders, including journalists, school counselors, subjects' supervisors, teachers, and others, were conducted during the visits. The interviews were done individually and in groups. This method gave room for constructive discussions and the development of ideas. These key actors provided information about the schooling system, the curriculum, and possible approaches to practically apply Peace Education in the system to meet students' needs.

    b) Participatory Observation

- Participatory observation in teacher's training courses at the school during the summer holiday.

- Participatory Observation in daily school classes.

2- The second case study occurred during The First Syrian Youth Conference in 2018 in Damascus, Syria. One hundred fifty young people from different governorates, ages, and backgrounds, in addition to key educational sector figures, attended the Conference. I participated as a part of the organizing team of the conference. I communicated with the students, the facilitators, and the organizers and finally participated in the conference's final report. The conference allowed students to express themselves and their obstacles and needs. Moreover, they suggested possible solutions to make the education process more appealing, engaging, and effective. The data was collected through

a) Focus group

b) Participatory Observation

- A research visit was undertaken at the Ministry of Education. The object was to obtain authorisation and gather information regarding the construction and operationalisation of the Curriculum. Interviews with key figures in the Ministry of Education and members of the Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation, were held.

- Consent was obtained from all subjects in photos, including the consent of legal guardians of all the children in the photos taken during the study.

SECTION I

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter One

Peace Studies

Figure 2 Students at the school in the study[2]

"Let us look for our place and act in accordance with it! Let us talk about the many peaces!".
(Dietrich and Sützl, 1997: 16).

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[2] Photos from the school in the study, 2022. Consent was obtained from the consent legal guardians of the children.

"Peace — the word evokes the simplest and the most cherished dream of humanity. Peace is, and always has been, the ultimate human aspiration. And yet our history overwhelmingly shows that while we speak incessantly of peace, our actions tell a very different story".

<div align="right">(Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, 1989: 1).</div>

Figure 3 Students at the school in the study[3]

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[3] Photos from the school in the study, 2022. Consent was obtained from the consent legal guardians of the children.

1.1 Introduction:

This chapter focuses on Peace Studies by exploring the implication of peace and conflict. The chapter explains that peace studies not only analyse the causes of conflicts but equally works on developing methods to prevent and transforming violence to peaceful ways and means. Peace Studies aims to build a culture of peace in just systems societies. The chapter differentiates between positive and negative peace and expands to direct violence and structural violence, which could be any social injustice, including physical and psychological. Positive peace is presented as social concepts and values, institutions, and structures that create a peaceful society by building a culture of peace. Positive social peace does not mean one holistic structure but rather a process that can be achieved through many small initiatives and Imperfect Peaces, which means (in the process).

The chapter indicates that Imperfect Peace allows us to take small steps to approach the culture of peace as humans with all our negative and positive attributes focusing on education as a crucial tool in the process. It is illustrated the urgent need for an educational system that supports education for peace to reach all ages, especially children and strata of society. Education for peace emerges and flourishes from the inside of students to an extent, hopefully out and around, to reach families, communities, societies, nation levels, and eventually globally. "Education for peace needs both the visioning and the practicality of moving internationally in the "now" toward the future we wish to see" (Harris and Morrison, 2013: 9).

Peace:

What could be an image that represents peace? It might seem an easy task, but in fact, it is not. Unfortunately, it is easier to create an image of war than an image of peace. Television, radio, and newspaper; these mediums support manufacturing images of war. When one of the professors

posed this question during my Master's degree lectures, it was difficult to imagine peace. The imagination of peace varies from family reunion photos to animal photos; a dove, a butterfly, or some parts of nature; the sky or a lake. One of the students drew an image of a woman showing that peace comes from inside (Figure 1).

For most people, peace is not represented in our humanity. They do not visualise peace as two people having a peaceful conversation, or a person reading a book happily, at a family reunion, in a hospital where doctors help patience, or even when someone dies peacefully among his wife and children. "Many of us might more easily be able to imagine a war scene than we can an individual dying peacefully in old age" (M. Harris and Morrison, 2013: 2).
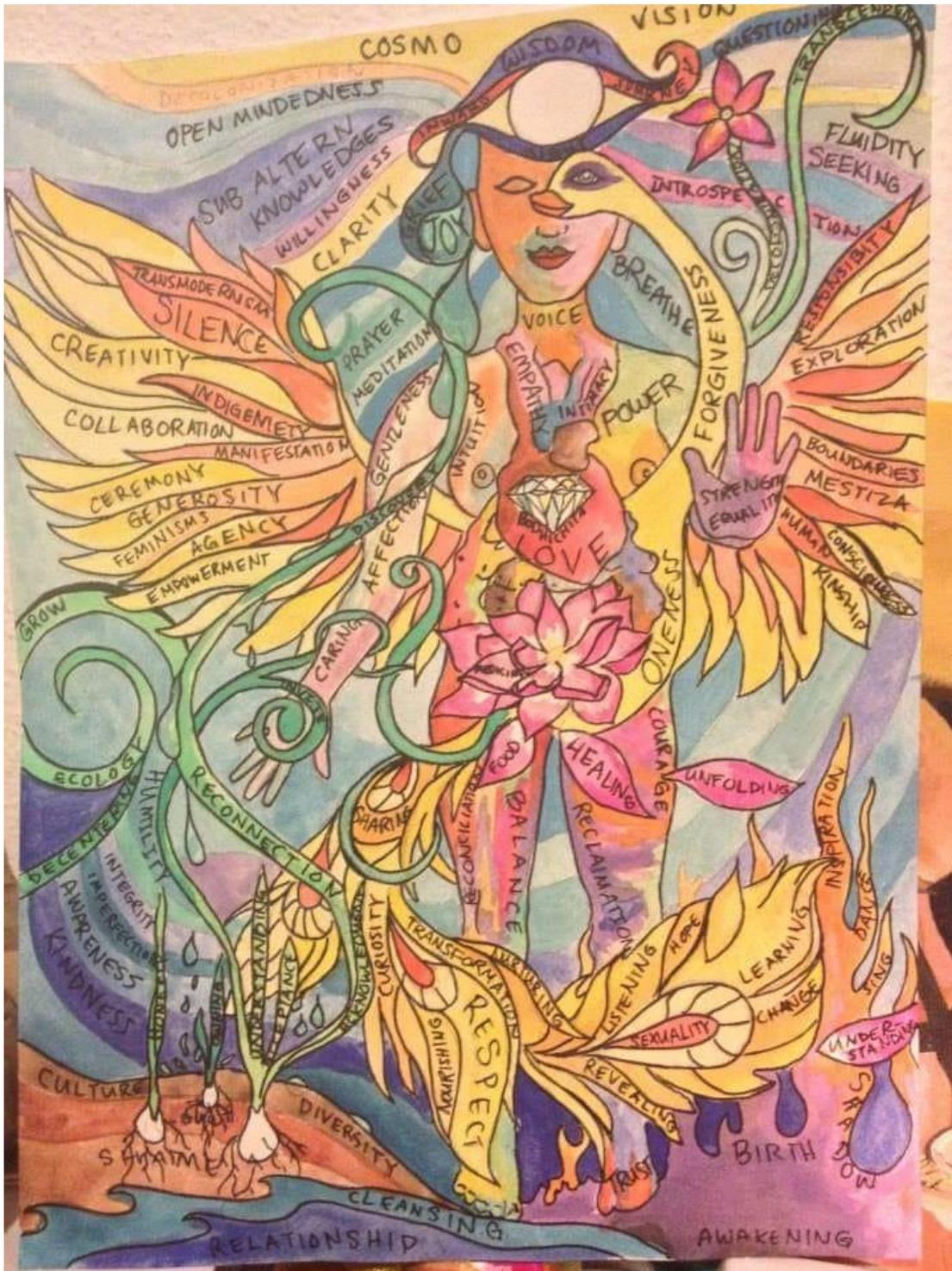
Figure 4 The Meaning of Peace[4]

1.2 Peace Studies: Peace and Conflict:

To understand peace, we need to understand war. Ending conflict and building peace need the understanding of both. Conflicts are part of human nature, part of human relationships and interactions. It is a challenge that faces us every day. Conflicts may lead to dangerous situations and may cause human rights violations. These violations leave permanent marks on people and change their lives forever. Conflicts may change people's lives, beliefs, priorities, and life principles. The point of Peace Studies lies in not only analysing the reasons for conflict or understanding those situations but also in trying to transform these situations through peaceful means. To know how to build peace, we need to understand what violence is.

What is peace? What do we really mean by peace?

Peace, for most people, has a limited meaning. This meaning might be a miniature version of what peace means. In The Cambridge dictionary defines peace as "freedom from war and violence, especially when people live and work together happily without disagreements." Also, it is "the state of not being interrupted or annoyed by worry, problems, noise, or unwanted actions" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2015). Peace could be the peace with God, the peace with the universe, the peace of mind, the peace with one's self, and peace with the others. In the words of the Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar, during the Nobel Peace Prize Award Ceremony in 1988, "Peace is an easy word to say in any language" (Abrams, 2008: 12).

Peace is, "[among] other human ideals, something every person and culture claims to desire, [such as] happiness, justice and health" (Weble and Galtung, 2007: 5). Peace exists inside every one of us. It is the essence of the sense of humanity, and it is "largely an individual matter" (Weble and Galtung, 2007: 5). But how is peace an inner matter and related to ourselves? Francisco

Muñoz provides an answer when he explains that peace "enables us to identify ourselves as humans; occasions, peace is what makes us fear, define, identify and flee from violence" (Muñoz, 2006: 241). At the same time, peace is also a social matter as it is "a linchpin of social harmony, economic equity and political justice," it is the rhythm of unity through which we have a better understanding of the different fields of life (Weble and Galtung, 2007: 5).

1.3 Negative Peace and Positive Peace:

Initially, peace was understood in the negative: The absence of war, armed conflict, and political violence. Peace is achieved when there is no armed attack and the country, and its borders are safe and secure. Nonetheless, peace must be more than the absence of violence. The distinction between positive and negative peace started in the 1950s due to the concentration of peace research on direct violence (Grewal, 2003:1). The terms positive and negative peace saw the light for the first time in "the *Editorial* to the founding edition of the *Journal of Peace Research* in 1964" (Grewal, 2003: 1; italics in the original) by Johan Galtung. 'Negative peace' is negative not because it is an unwanted target. Still, negative peace refers to the lack of a specific type of behaviour because its presence is recognized by the absence or lack of these fatal social and political factors. (Galtung, 1967: 12). Consequently, negative peace was "the absence of violence, absence of war" and positive peace was defined as "the integration of human society" (Galtung, 1964: 2). Both of them should be visualized as "separated dimensions" where having one of them is possible without the other (Galtung, 1964: 2).

Patricia Shields, a professor of political science at Texas State University, highlighted that the study of peace and war gradually became "conflated as if mirror images of each other" because negative peace controls the fields of peace studies and peace research (2017: 2). The Journal of

Peace Research indicated the fact that Peace Research becomes "Just the Study of War?" (Journal of Peace Research: 2014) and negative peace sees the job accomplished once violence stops; however, if we do not consider "the longer-term horizon of a sustained Peace" that may leave gaps for human rights abuses to continue (Shields, 2017: 2).

The Norwegian Nobel Committee and Johan Galtung in the 1960s expanded the peace and violence concepts to include indirect or structural violence. They formulated the concept of negative peace and positive peace as peace research "twin goals" (Journal of Peace Research, 2014: 149). Galtung (1969) redefined positive peace as "the negation of structural violence" which is different from direct violence "(actor-oriented violence) since it emanated not from an individual or group actors, but from the structure of a social system" (Journal of Peace Research, 2014: 149). Structural violence could be any kind of physical and psychological injustice (Galtung, 1969: 173) and could be used not only on an interpersonal or global level but extends to all social organization levels (Journal of Peace Research, 2014: 149). Thus, "*Negative* peace by averting war or stopping violence implies the absence of direct, personal violence" (Harris, 2004: 12; italics in the original).

Structural violence can emerge for different reasons, including intolerance of differences in beliefs, views, cultures, or other reasons. Violence has many various forms and causing harm to others is only one of them. According to Indian scriptures (UNESCO, 2005: 3- 4), violence has three forms; mental (manasik), verbal (vachik), and physical (kayeek). Mental violence means to think ill of another. Even solely thinking or wishing to harm someone is considered a form of violence. Verbal violence happens through speaking. Using inappropriate severe sayings is considered a form of violence. Finally, causing physical injury to others is the third form of violence. Verbal and physical violence emerge from violent thinking. There are many possible reasons underlying violent thinking, including the lack of contentedness.

For Galtung, the culture of violence means the aspects of culture … that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence". If the opposite of violence is peace, then the opposite of cultural violence "would be cultural peace". Therefore, the culture of peace means the aspects of "a culture that serve to justify peace". According to Galtung, cultural violence "makes direct and structural violence look, even feel, right – or at least not wrong". As a result, both structure and direct violence become justified and accepted in societies. (Galtung, 1990: 292). All these forms are connected and affect one another, and to deal with violence, we need to deal with all its forms (UNESCO, 2005: 3-4). In the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, which is based on Vedantic tradition, contentedness is one of the solid foundations of peace, which means satisfaction of desires. Desire could be an everlasting thing with no end as "satisfaction of every desire leads to another desire of higher-order rather than to contentedness" (UNESCO, 2005: 5). Failure to satisfy desires is the beginning of mental, verbal, and physical violence. Future generations should be enlightened about the reasons and the consequences of the forms of violence to renounce a culture of violence and instead support a culture of peace.

Positive Peace, in a study by Iain Atack, is a positive vision of peace that incorporates a host of concepts and values such as justice, democracy, sympathy, cooperation, effectiveness, freedom, engagement, order, harmony, and collaboration. In addition, positive peace can also have religious origins and overtones, such as blessed are the peacemakers: On the other hand, positive peace includes the absence of structural violence. Positive social and political factors such as justice, human rights, equality, and well-being are described as 'positive peace'. Therefore, war, armed conflict, and political violence result from the absence of positive peace (Atack, 2009: 41). "Positive peace requires...the presence of social institutions that provide for an equitable distribution of resources and peaceful resolution of conflicts" (Harris, 2004: 12).

According to Institute for Economics & Peace IEP, positive peace can be defined as "creating an optimal environment for human potential to flourish" (2020: 4) and can be described as "*attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies*" (2020: 6; italics in the original). Positive peace is linked to socio-economic elasticity/resilience. Countries that develop high positive peace have better economic outcomes and a faster ability to regain strength and stability from an internal and external crisis. These elements that produce enduring peace leads to many positive effects in societies, some of which are:

- Thriving economies

- Better performance on ecological measures

- High levels of resilience and adaptability to change

- Wellbeing and happiness (Institute for Economics & Peace IEP, 2020: 4).

Based on the previous idea, peace can be envisioned in two dimensions (Johnson and Johnson, 2006: 1). On one side of the first dimension, there are war, violence, and strife, while on the other, there are settlements, agreements, or common understanding that avoid violence and hostilities. As a result, when war is absent, peace is assumed to exist. In the second dimension, social injustice is on one side and social justice on the other.

Therefore, peace supposedly exists if mutual goals, benefits, and social justice exist. Based on that, it can be found among individuals, groups, and nations. But it is difficult to maintain and preserve between parties having conflicts. Therefore, how peace can spread or be reduced depends on each party's response. This clearly makes peace not an easy process with perfect results; it takes time and many steps. Muñoz argues that we should "break away from the previous conceptions in which *peace* appears as something perfect, infallible, utopian, finished, distant, unachievable in

the short term" (Muñoz, 2006: 259; italic in the original). People should realize that this utopian peace is only "achievable in the other world, in glory, in heaven, through the mediation of the Gods, far removed from mundane issues, beyond the reach of humans alone" (Muñoz, 2006: 259). People should accept that they live in a world of continuous conflicts. Yearning for peace drives people to produce many concepts and posit many theories about achieving Peace. As necessity is the mother of invention, the idea of imperfect peace has been gradually forged as an answer and a solution to our question (Muñoz, 2006: 259).

1.4 Imperfect Peace:

Imperfect peace allows us to approach peace as humans with all our negative and positive attributes, with our values, attitudes, our successes, and failures. Imperfect here does not refer to a negative sense; on the contrary, it implies a sense of positive transformation. In other words, imperfect here is more like an order to work, create, influence, and "perform in a sense of positive, propositional transformation – of change towards -, [sic] of regulation of conflicts" (Muñoz, 2006: 260). In short, imperfect peace support creating a culture of peace. Peace is always linked to conflict and violence; this is the reason for understanding "imperfect" as in the process. Furthermore, "imperfection" gives us the possibility to come closer to and see our human side in which all its "successes and errors, can coexist" (Muñoz, 2006: 260).

Unfortunately, violence is part of people's lives and affects their understanding of war and peace. I agree with Muñoz when he says, "we have a greater comprehension of violence than of peace" (Muñoz, 2006: 243). It is not easy to stay the same person with the same beliefs after witnessing sheds of innocent blood. It took me a long time to sleep without experiencing nightmares of the dramatic events I witnessed during the war. It is not easy to ask a person who

has suffered a trauma to analyse the reasons and "the causes behind this war and that war; counting and recounting nuclear warheads and missiles; ethnic conflicts; conflicts between religions; hunger; poverty; economic exploitation; marginalization; one form of violence and another" (Muñoz, 2006: 243). Violence affects people's lives in various ways and thus involves their acceptance and rational understanding of the reasons and the solutions of peace and war. Imperfect peace, despite these effects, could provide hope.

According to, Muñoz, "it is a matter of changing our reality based on our knowledge of human limitations and present scenarios" (Muñoz, 2006: 280). I disagree with Muñoz about "human limitations" because these limitations are just human creations to excuse our failures in achieving our goals. Instead, reality can be changed based on our knowledge of unlimited human capacities, which is an idea he emphasizes later when he says, "In other words, *we have an enormous potential for building peace*" (Muñoz, 2006: 242; italics in the original). For him, we need to be armed with "knowledge provided by the different sciences, forecasting and future studies. Yet without having to renounce making plans for the future or having a goal: imperfect peace, which, although more modest, is still a desirable, overall goal" (Muñoz, 2006: 280). He is looking for a down-to-earth peace, which is peace fostered person-to-person.

People should stay motivated to keep trying to create moments of imperfect peace despite the difficulties. Having these moments of peace is something wonderful, but peace is not an easy process. It requires a great deal of sincere effort. People should realise that peace is essential to protect their loved ones. Participating in the process of creating imperfect peace gives the people they care about the opportunity to have a safer future. People should stop negative attitudes and realize that they have a responsibility. "We are dangerous when we are not conscious of our responsibility for how we behave, think and feel" (Rosenberg, 2003: 21). Moreover, people must

"learn to listen for feelings… to accept answers" that they do not always want to hear (Rosenberg, 2003: 8). Inspiring other people and encouraging them to join is not an easy process. However, when the goal is transparent, honest, and sincere, millions of people will at least be curious to know and understand it. It is not the absolute solution for conflicts, but to give from the heart and hear your own and others' deeper needs helps us find the empowerment we seek in war-torn countries.

In a few deep words, Muñoz summarizes the entire experience of many countries in conflict in a nutshell. According to him:

> Under the denomination *imperfect peace,* we could group together such experiences and states in which conflicts have been regulated peacefully; i.e. where human individuals and/or groups have opted to help fulfil [sic] the needs of others, without there having been any cause beyond their will that impeded this.
> (Muñoz, 2006: 256; italics in the original).

In conflict zones, it is difficult to think about perfect peace. However, the idea of imperfect peace is taking place all of the time. These moments of imperfect peace are like constellations to be used for navigation, showing everyone the right way to achieve peace. Muñoz affirms that "an imperfect peace helps to recognise peaceful practices wherever they occur, revealing such milestones as forms of support for a greater and more extensive peace" (Muñoz, 2006: 259). An excellent example of this is Syria, where moments of imperfect peace are happening all over the country. Many people invest much energy and love, even risking their personal safety, to make these moments happen. A woman providing some food to soldiers who were spending the whole night standing at a checkpoint, is a shining star. Soldiers bringing water to a family stuck in the middle of a battle and trying to provide food and shelter to displaced families, are another. These moments show that "an *imperfect peace* helps us to plan for conflictive and ever incomplete futures"

(Muñoz, 2006: 259; italics in the original). These acts, imperfect moments of peace, are anchors to the peace we aim to have in the future.

Despite the deep conflict and difficulties, there are many peace initiatives and hundreds of social and non-governmental organizations. These actions are what Wolfgang Dietrich and Wolfgang Sützl call "peaces." For them, "the response to the structural violence of modernity both in postmodern thinking as in view of the real-political situation can only be the demand of a pluralistic, differentiated, and incompatible vision of peace. *Postmodernity calls for many 'peaces'*" (Dietrich and Sützl, 1997: 14; italics in the original). This does not mean that everyone will understand the other, but "all live in their own peace, that is, treat others like the members of their own kin, and so respect them even if they do not understand them" (Dietrich and Sützl, 1997: 15-16). This is the same pluralist understanding of peace, which Vicent Martínez Guzmán (2001) has discussed in many of his works. Imperfect peace allows us to recognize all peaces (Martínez Gúzman, 2001), big, medium, and small peaces; individual and group peaces; local and international peaces; "negative" and "positive" peaces and their relationships with each other (Muñoz, 2006: 256). Imperfect peaces can be achieved on many levels, starting from the personal to the universal level.

1.5 Culture of Peace:

Peace Studies does not exist only in academic and philosophical books, nor is it esoteric. It also expands to combine all aspects and avenues of life, as well as the cultural influences behind all our decisions, our education, our media, our language, our view of the environment, and our view of the other (Alger, 2007: 299-318). "Peace studies...rests on the claim that there are alternatives to any existing social order and that human agency and moral choice are

fundamental...to their realization" (McSweeney, 1998: 6- 7). Peace Studies aims to show that there are always alternative principles to achieve peace in any society through a culture of peace. The United Nations General Assembly President Al-Nasser said, "If we are to come out of the shadows of conflict and make a new beginning, all members of society must be inspired by the culture of peace" (United Nations, 2012). Spreading such a culture is most critical to today's world. He added that a culture of peace is a set of values and attitudes based on the principles of freedom, respect for diversity, solidarity, as well as dialogue, and understanding. In the spirit of realizing a culture of peace, the United Nations in 1999 passed a UN Resolution A/RES/53/243, which was based on eight different foundations for a culture of peace: (1) education, (2) sustainable development, (3) human rights, (4) gender equality, (5) democratic participation, (6) understanding, tolerance and solidarity, (7) participatory communication and free flow of information, and finally, (8) international peace and security (Rivera, 2004: 531). Furthermore, during the General Assembly Forum on a Culture of Peace, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, "When we look at the suffering in our world, we know how urgently we need a culture of peace" (United Nations, 2012). He added that the people are calling out for this. They are aware that there could be no military solution to their conflicts. So, instead of wasting resources on weapons, the $1.7 trillion that the world spent on weapons in 2011 should be spent to achieve prosperity and development for people (United Nations, 2012).

The requirements to achieve a culture of peace make it challenging to attain, and we must realize that many obstacles hinder the achievement of peace. The cause of peace needs to be understood not only in the passive sense of the absence of war but also in the constructive (positive) sense of creating conditions for equality and social justice. A culture of peace is not just the absence of war between and within nations. It requires a profound socio-cultural and economic

transformation to provide peace as an attractive alternative to war. The concept of a culture of peace should be reflected in all aspects of society, including "democratic participation, press freedom, human rights, economic and social development, and gender equality" (Rivera, 2004: 544). However, we should keep in mind that liberal and economic development is not always enough to ensure domestic equality and serenity. Neither the absence of violent inequality nor the previous elements are able to prevent armed conflict (Rivera, 2004: 544).

Moreover, it is essential to perceive the connection between a culture of peace and what we know about human nature and the status quo. According to UNESCO (1995), a culture of peace requires respect for the rights of others. It suggests "a global identity that is based on local identities, with a global solidarity against common threats to our earth" (Rivera, 2004: 545). However, people sometimes tend to be biased and prejudiced. Gottlieb explained in his book *Nation Against State* (1993) that if ethnic and State identities are possible to be separated, "conflicts can be isolated and contained by a global state identity" (Rivera, 2004: 546). Otherwise, global solidarity is hard to achieve.

1.5.1 Tools for a Culture of Imperfect Peaces:

In the attempt to achieve cultures of many peaces, or a culture of imperfect peace, we have to arrive at a state of mutual understanding of the other and of current situations. It is very important in achieving shining stars and building peace and a culture of peace. Muñoz indicated that human beings were designed for cooperation and conflict, and peace "can only be defined and lived on the basis of acknowledging both" because both cooperation and conflict are "processes and not states" (Dietrich, 2018: 26).

> Este enfoque nos permite también pensar la paz como un *proceso* un camino inacabado. Así puede ser entendida la frase de Gandhi *no hay camino para la paz,*

> *la paz es el camino*. No podría serlo de otra manera, las realidades sociales y ambientales «evolucionan» continuamente, las formas conflictivas también. La paz así no es un objetivo teleológico sino un presupuesto que se reconoce y construye cotidianamente (Muñoz, 2006: 406).

For this purpose, we have to open up the possibility for new channels, considering that these channels need tools to be created. Employing technology and the implementation of globalization to spread awareness and reduce cultural distance becomes an essential step. The effects of new technologies, mainly information and communication technologies (ICTs) are well known in supporting peaceful social development. A good example for that is the peaceful and prosperous outcome of the UN integrating new technologies into its discussion and work agenda by containing a commitment to "ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, …are available to all" (Independent Commission on Multilateralism, 2016: 3). International Telecommunication Union showed that around "1.38 percent increase in gross domestic product (GDP) for every 10 percent increase in broadband penetration in low- and middle-income countries" (Independent Commission on Multilateralism, 2016: 3). Key UN conferences such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change Independent increasingly highlight the connection between new technologies and sustainable development. Another move for reduce cultural distance and share information is the "open principles" which a good number of agencies have agreed such as UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Program (UNDP) and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for more sharing data and information (UNICEF, 2014).

Enhancing a culture of peace through educational curricula that promote essential values, attitudes and behaviours is a fundamental step. The pillars for building a culture of peace are the people themselves. Each person has his/her essential rule in the peacebuilding process, and

"through them that peaceful relationships and structures are created. Hence, educating people toward becoming peace agents is central to the task of peacebuilding… One can readily see how peace is therefore both a significant peacebuilding strategy", in cases of post-conflict situations and an efficacious tool to prevent violent conflict (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace, 2010: 27). Education aiming for peace is transformative education. "It cultivates the knowledge base, skill, attitudes and values that seek to transform people's mindsets, attitudes and behavior". It aspires to achieve this kind of transformation through working on raising awareness and developing new perspectives and understanding of the personal and social obstacles "which will enable people to live, related and create conditions and systems that actualize nonviolence, justice, environmental care and other peace value" (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace, 2010: 28). In other words, an education works for peace, helps youth to realize the root causes of a certain conflict, supports them through tools such as reflection, discussion, empathy and techniques such as a perspective-taking technique to draw out possible alternative means, to as a result encourage them to work for transformation through nonviolent methods to build a culture of peace (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace, 2010: 28).

1.6 Conclusion:

It is easy to talk about peace, but it is challenging to achieve. This chapter demonstrated that conflicts might be inevitable, but violence is not. The world is struggling with many problems that permeate all levels, from economic to cultural. Understanding peace requires understanding war and the relation that stands between them. Peace studies deeply explore and analyse the causes and reasons for both peace and conflict for a better understanding aiming to transform conflict situations through peaceful means. Peace is much more than the absence of war. Accomplishing

only negative peace in the sense of the absence of violence is not enough to build a culture of peace. Achieving a culture of peace needs elements driven by societies and people themselves. Societies need to adopt influencing effective elements that support active and positive peace. Peace calls for social values such as sympathy, cooperation, and effectiveness and rejects structural violence working for the "integrating of the human society" (Galtung, 1964: 2), (Galtung, 1969: 173). Stable peace, in one way or another, leads society to thrive at economic, environmental, resilience, and well-being levels.

Peace and war are related to human nature; therefore, it is not an easy process to achieve. Imperfect peace gives us the chance to proceed toward peace as humans with all our negative and positive attributes, with our values, attitudes, our successes, and failures. The term "Imperfect" here implies a positive sense of transformation. Imperfect implies the meaning of "in-process" as it enables us to come closer to and see our human side (Muñoz, 2006: 260). This would not be possible in the absence of sustainable systems of education. An educational system that provides education for peace and supports a culture of imperfect peaces is an imperative element. It expands awareness of the transformative potential of human agency in achieving such change and has the ability to spread awareness and prepare human beings to prevent and deal with different types of problems. Developing a culture of peace needs an education that focuses on developing harmony among people and encourages positive, peaceful thinking through dialogue and communication. The previous Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon citation declared, "We need a culture that upholds human dignity and human life... I have a simple, one-word answer: education" (United Nations, 2012).

Education is a powerful tool for peaceful transformation. Education for peace works on transforming the human condition of today by "changing social structures and patterns of thought

that have created it" for a culture of peace (Reardon and Cabezudo, 2002). The United Nations initiative "Education First" aims to give every child a chance to attend school, strengthen core values and receive a quality education (United Nations, 2012), especially for younger minds, to enhance tolerance, negotiation and solidarity, and emphasis understanding and non-violence, as Ban Ki-moon stressed, "One that does not glorify war but educates for peace" (United Nations, 2012).

Chapter Two

Peace Education

Figure 5 Students at the School in the Study[5]

Peace Education is called transformative education because it seeks changes – in "people's mindsets, attitudes, values, and behaviors that, in the first place, have either created or exacerbated violent conflicts" (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace, 2010: 27).

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[5] Photos from the school in the study, 2022. Consent was obtained from the consent legal guardians of the children.

2.1 Introduction:

This chapter explores Peace Education, demonstrating how education is a powerful social tool in preventing a culture of violence. The chapter provide the history of Peace Education, explaining its roots and how it emerged and developed during the years. Then it highlights that Education for Peace does not need to be a standalone subject, rather it can be integrated into the existing curriculum. Furthermore, it illustrates the elements required to design a curriculum that supports Education for Peace. Finally, the chapter elucidates the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an example of applying Education for Peace in countries in crisis.

Lederach presented the idea of the paradox. He believed that "the energy of the ideas is enhanced if they are held together, like two sides of the coin" (Lederach, 1995: 19). Peace and conflict are two sides of a coin. Approaching them from a "dialect perspective" encourages us to consider them in terms of paradoxes. A paradox is an interaction between two opposite notions. Therefore, embracing the paradox is "a useful tool in understanding conflict and in exploring the key values of peacemaking" (Lederach, 1995: 19). Lederach revealed a realistic method. However, to apply this method, we need tools, and to approach these tools, we need education.

Education is "the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life" (The Collins Dictionary, 2022). Rabindranath Tagore said, "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence." (SHIKSHA Finance, 2020: i). Peace can be found everywhere and in everyone. However, the challenge is to keep the rhythm and harmony of this peace when it is constantly ruptured and corrupted by many forms of conflict. Education plays a crucial role in preventing the continued chains of violence. Education is a vital tool that gives the knowledge and the skills to

find solutions to environmental, economic, and social issues. It is reflected in the effort to formalize the wisdom and the knowledge of life we inherited from our ancestors. It is at every conference and meeting around the world.

For John Dewey, "Education is the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfil his responsibilities" (Aggarwal, S. and Jca, O., 2010: 9). In the report of UNESCO of 2001, the next generation is often criticised for being "insensitive to the problems of society, selfish, narrow-minded, lacking in intellectual depth and susceptible to the violent and corrupt social pressures." Therefore, people have started to realise the importance of teaching human values for a peaceful, healthy life through integrating these methods into school curricula. Concentrating on a balanced curriculum where cognitive learning is not at the expense of children's intellectual, emotional, and humanistic development is essential (Figure 7 presents an illustration of the child's needs as created by this author).
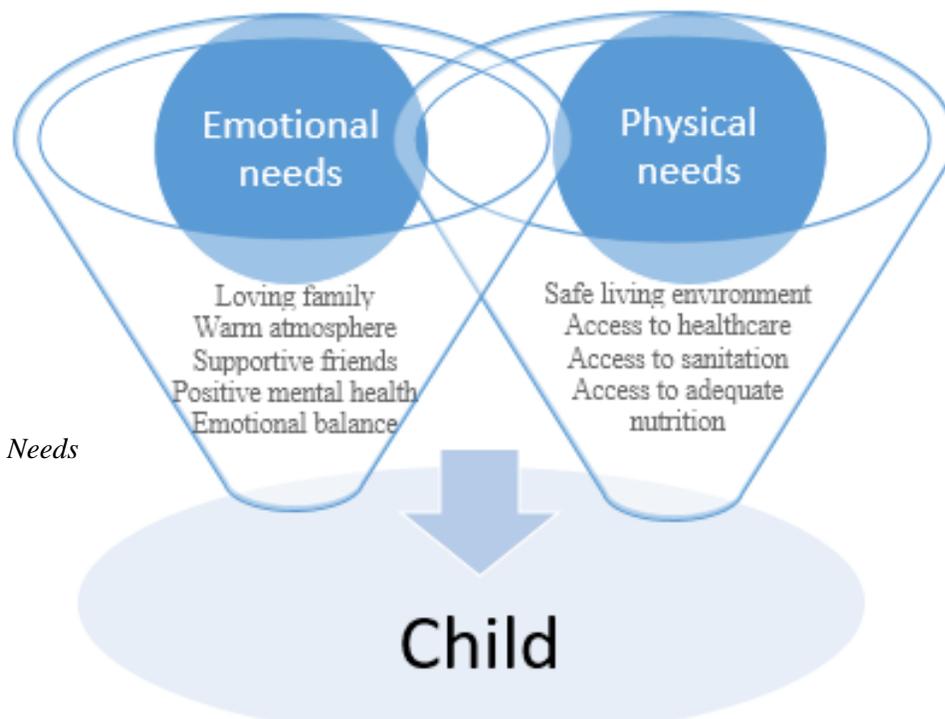
Figure 6 Child's Needs

A balanced curriculum model, which focuses on Education for Peace, is the solution to many issues we are facing in our societies. It gives children different perspectives of the world, especially in countries in crisis. A great image for Education for Peace was given by Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace. They described it

> as a tree with many robust branches… Disarmament Education, Human Rights Education, Global Education, Conflict Resolution Education, Multicultural Education… Interfaith Education, Gender-fair Education, Development Education and Environmental Education.
>
> (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace, 2008: 31).

Unfortunately, many schools do not represent a place of leisure or peace even though the word "school" is derived from the Greek "skhole", which means leisure (UNESCO, 2001: 2). Instituting sustainable education systems is a challenge that requires "new partnerships — among governments, academic and scientific communities, teachers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local communities and the media. All are essential to the birth of a culture of sustainability" (UNESCO, 2004b: 30). Each community has its own characteristic and own identity, which are unique and universal. The curriculum should include the specific and the universal aspects to achieve the planning goals. Therefore, it is essential to design "a tailor-made curriculum based on the universal principles of peace in the context of the specific realities of each community" (Danesh, 2011: 33).

2.2 Education as a Social Tool: Definition of Education and its Role in Society.

2.2.1 What is Peace Education:

Marmar Mukhopadhyay, the director of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration in New Delhi (NIEPA), states that "If education is the only defence against human catastrophe, Peace Education is the soul of education that can create the shield for human survival

on the planet earth" (UNESCO, 2005: vii). Peace Education is a set of skills that can be developed

through a process defined in the UNICEF report as

> 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 the conditions
> conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.
>
> (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace, 2008: xiii).

Peace Education empowers spiritual, cultural, and universal human values and supports building

peaceful behaviour. It has two goals, a short-term and a long-term one. In the short term, educators

provide information about the immediate conflicts with strategies to control and resolve violence.

For the long-term goal, they work to plant seeds of dedication to nonviolence in students to spread

awareness and knowledge of peaceful conflict transformation and nonviolent alternatives (Harris,

2009: 1). Considering peace as both a process and an outcome helps us see peace not as an abstract

idea but as an action-oriented term (UNESCO, 2005: 8). Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman defined

it as

> Peace Education is holistic. It embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social
> growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values. It is
> based on a philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, co-operation and
> reverence for the human family and all life on our beautiful planet.
>
> Peace Education is skill building. It empowers children to find creative and non-destructive
> ways to settle conflict and to live in harmony with themselves, others, and their world......
> Peace building is the task of every human being and the challenge of the human family.
>
> (Schmidt and Friedman in UNESCO, 2005: 9).

Though the two definitions are worded differently, there is an emphasis in both on learning the

values of peace. Similar to a description of peace by Theresa M. Bey and Gwendolyn U. Turner

in the same report of UNESCO (2005: 8) saying that peace is "the behaviour that encourages harmony in the way people talk, listen, and interact with each other and discourages actions to hurt, harm, or destroy each other". Peace Education, in simple words, is learning the concepts and the values of peace to develop skills that support striving for a peaceful world. It is a designed education system to steer children away from the path of violence by focusing on the main reasons that create conflict.

Peace Education is a clue to understanding the main elements of peace and war as it goes beyond conflicts and peaceful transformation. It expands to involve the participation and the cooperation of the youth using their ideas and experiences to eliminate violence, first within themselves and then from the entire society (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace, 2008: xiii). I consider Peace Education the first and most important step to replacing a culture of violence with a culture of peace. To change our actions, we need to change our beliefs and ideas. Education is a torch in the peace process and developing a supportive educational system can lead to a culture of peace. Through education, solution-oriented positive thinking can be built up. By adjusting the academic curriculum, we can develop and promote values, concepts, and peaceful behaviour consistent with a culture of peace. Many examples in history show the critical role of education. The education raised in Japan is a good example. In a short time, a new education system full of new concepts and notions replaced many feelings of loathing, hate, and contempt with a vision of peace and development. In general, the new Japanese generations believe that their main aim in life is to reconstruct their country, side by side and hand in hand. Governments can make treaties, but only humans can make peace (Campbell and others, 2013: 51-54).

In today's torn, divided world, learning how to live together becomes increasingly essential. The wrong approaches to populism and diversity led to the fear of the other and destroy

the unity of societies. Nonetheless, respect, compassion, and empathy can be taught to grow and spread like watering saplings to grow with strong deep roots and twigs that reach the sky. It is the guide that can help children to handle the trauma of the horror they have faced through processes of peaceful dialogue (The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict GPPAC, 2020: 1).

2.2.2 History of Peace Education:

Peace has a long history with different views and methods. Peace Education through generations has been informally employed to find solutions and sort out conflicts in peaceful ways. Anthropologists have discovered that there are at least 47 relatively peaceful societies (Banta, 1993). The "concept Peace Education has, both in history and today, been interpreted as an ethic, moral, religious and philosophical matter". When it comes to war and peace, Peace Education was seen "as skills and competencies for conflict handling has roots in psychological and pedagogical theories" (Andersson, Hinge, and Messina, 2011: 1).

History is full of stories of conflict resolution strategies and techniques. A great example of communities aiming to build social harmony and peaceful relationships more than punishment is the tribes in Africa. They have their own tools to establish peaceful solutions and spread Education for Peace in their communities:

> Africa's own indigenous conflict resolution mechanism provides a better approach. It requires four parties: an arbiter, the combatants, and civil society or those directly and indirectly affected by the conflict (the victims). As we have seen above, in traditional Africa, when two disputants cannat resolve their differences by themselves, the case is taken to a chief's court for adjudication. The court is open and anyone affected by the dispute can participate. The complainant makes his case, then the defendant. Next, anybody else who has something to say may do so. After all the arguments have been heard, the chief renders a decision. The guilty party may be fined say two goats. In default, his family is held liable. The injured party receives on goat and the other goat is slaughtered for a village feast for all to enjoy (Uwazie, 2003: 54).

Many examples show how humans have developed and shared these techniques to avoid violence. Many generations handed down these nonviolent tactics and instruments through informal Education for Peace. But this does not mean that these strategies can only be practiced informally. As a matter of fact, they can be practiced "informally within communities" and "formally within institutional places of learning" (Harris, 2008: 1). A large number of people had devoted their lives and put tremendous efforts into "thinking and teaching for and about Peace Education" in different ways during times (Andersson, Hinge, and Messina, 2011: 1).

Peace Education started with religions and the teaching of prophets and continued with religious and spiritual figures such as Lao-Tzu and Buddha, who became a symbol of peace. Buddha was born in the 6th century. "Buddha" means "enlightened one," and the philosophy of Buddhism is a philosophy of life that aims to "sentient beings from suffering". The law of karma is essential in Buddhism, which states: "for every event that occurs, there will follow another event whose existence was caused by the first, and this second event will be pleasant or unpleasant according as its cause was skillful or unskillful" (UNHCR, 2012: 1). The law of Karma educates us that wrong actions and intentions will have dire consequences on the people who perform them. Taoism philosophy believes that people can be harmonized and be at peace with existence "Heaven and earth are unified and rain the dew of peace" (Chang, 2014: 119). The Tao Te Ching is attributed to the Lao-Tzu philosopher, who said it was born twenty years older than Confucius (551- 479 BC) in the sixth century (Chang, 2014: 7). This philosophy entered Europe in 1788. The key word in Taotze's philosophy is (Tao), which means (Way). According to Heidegger, "*Tao* could be the way that gives all ways, the very source of our power to think what reason, meaning *logos*, properly means to say-properly, by their proper nature" (Chang, 2014: 9). Taoism seeks unity and works to unite all forces together, "the unity of multiplicities and the unity of opposites" for a greater good,

and sees human beings are good in nature and "free of the intention of war" (Chang, 2014: 229).

The 17th century Czech educator Comenius was one of the first Europeans to use the written word for Peace Education. He realised that a path to peace could be envisioned through "universally shared knowledge," (Harris, 2001: 19), as understanding the "other" minimises misinterpretation and disputes. Later, Immanuel Kant established in his book *Perpetual Peace* the notion that people can achieve peace by building legal and judicial systems, in other words, the "liberal notion" (Harris, 2001: 19). Max Lawson wrote in 1989 that the year 1912 witnessed the establishment of The American School Peace League, where many teachers from various countries joined to have "an annual School Peace Day (May 18) which was celebrated in schools" (Andersson, Hinge, and Messina, 2011: 1).

After the Napoleonic Wars, the modern peace movement contra war started in the 19th century and indigenous peace organizations formed in Great Britain, Belgium, and France, spreading to all European nations. Many social and political studies started about the threats of wars. During this century, groups of teachers, students, and universities established peace societies to enlighten the public and spread awareness about the horrible consequences of war (Salomon and Cairns, 2010: 12-13).

However, with the coming of "Western secularism" and the positivist and reductionist scientific vision of education, the focus on human values, including peace values, was "slowly discouraged away from school curricula" (UNESCO, 2001: 3), and the focus shifted to teaching facts. Despite this movement, thinkers and educators such as Rousseau, Tolstoy, Jane Addams, and Maria Montessori worked to keep the method of Peace Education on the map (UNESCO, 2001: 3). Moreover, in the Interbellum period, international relations were taught by social studies teachers to avoid war with foreigners (Harris, 2001: 19).

Jane Addams was one of the leading figures promoting Peace Education in the United States. Not only did she establish Chicago's famed Hull House and develop the slogan of "peace and bread" to highlight the link between poverty and war, but she also championed education for all. She wanted educators to connect class material with real life. She encouraged schools to include immigrants and campaigned for the breakdown of gender norms in the educational system (Harris, 2008: 2). For her work, Addams was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 (Cavna, 2013). At the same time, Maria Montessori urged teachers all over Europe to replace the authoritarian pedagogies with education promoting the love of others and freeing the children's spirit (Harris, 2001: 19). According to Verdiana Grossi, "Between 1889 and 1939, 33 universal peace congresses take place, most of which address peace education" (Andersson, Hinge, and Messina, 2011, 1). In the 1930s, she said in a public speech, "those who want war prepare young people for war; but those who want peace have neglected young children and adolescents so that they are unable to organize them for peace" (UNESCO, 2001: 3). According to her, "man" is essentially "pure by nature." Therefore, children, who are the "promise of mankind," have to be protected from deviation or drawing away from the path by society. Their light beams are a gift to their societies. She called for constructive education that allows the development of inner peace and conscious perspectives of the "mission" of human beings in life and the current situation they are facing. Schools should be tools to elevate social progress for a better understanding of the world they are living in (UNESCO, 2001: 3).

In 1949 Herbert Read called for a merger between art and Peace Education to create images to influence people to encourage peace actively. After World War Two's terror, many people worldwide realised the importance of education with a focus on the human side and citizenship (Harris, 2001: 19). UNESCO, after the Constitution 1946 where stated, "Since war begins in the

minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defense of peace must be constructed" (UNESCO, 1947: 276), commenced school projects built on international understanding where students from "different countries, even crossing the "iron-curtain border" between east and west, were involved in projects". However, during the Cold War, some nations did not continue the cooperation because it was a "questionable project" (Andersson, Hinge, and Messina, 2011: 2). A series of peace research centers and academic programs were established. One of these was the Lents Institute in St. Louis, founded in 1945 by the psychologist Ted Lentz to conduct peace research (Harris, 2007: xi). After that, a peace studies program was founded in 1948 at Manchester College in Indiana in the United States. Later, and as a result of the Vietnam War, many educational institutions around the world were encouraged to increase awareness about the consequences of war, which promoted the field of peace research to be considered a "science of peace" (Harris, 2001: 19- 20).

Later in the coming years, some conferences were held that significantly influenced the development of Peace Education. One good example is the schools in Sweden which are supported by the Swedish National Board of Education (Bjerstedt, 1985). In 1974 International Peace Research Association began a Peace Education Commission, and after ten years, Teacher for Peace as a national and international organization was established. In the same year, Maria Montessori's book came to light *Education for a New World* (Andersson, Hinge, and Messina, 2011: 2), and Quakers working on a project on community conflict in New York designed a curriculum for young children aiming to promote students' self-worth, creativities and conflict resolution skills. *The friendly Classroom for a Small Planet* was translated into seven languages (Harris, 2001: 19- 20). Its goals were:

> (1) To promote growth toward a community in which children are capable and desirous of open communication; (2) to help children gain insights into the nature of human feelings and share their own feelings; and (3) to explore with children the unique, personal ways in which they can respond to problems and begin to prevent or solve conflicts (Harris, 2001:

20).

The aim of this curriculum aims is to work on the reasons for conflict inside the psyches of children. During the 1980s, the idea of Education for Peace in the West aimed to build a generation with the ability to "combine knowledge, feelings and agency" (Andersson, Hinge, and Messina, 2011: 3). In addition, three important books were published regarding Education for Peace. They develop a holistic approach to Education for Peace and the role of school, family, and society in encouraging critical thinking, cooperative learning, moral sensitivity, and other underlying issues that the era struggled with, from domestic violence to war. These books were: *Education for Peace* (1985) by Birgit Brocke-Utne of Norway, *Comprehensive Peace Education* (1988) by Betty Reardon of the United States, and *Peace Education* (1988) by Ian Harris, also from the United States (Harris, 2001: 20). Betty Reardon differentiated between "education *for peace* from education *about peace*". Education is the one that establishes the basis and the foundation for building peace (Andersson, Hinge, and Messina, 2011: 2; italics in the original). In the seventeenth century, Max Lawson with Comenius believed in "a unity-based knowledge" to unite people. Verdiana Grossi's involvement began in the early nineteenth century when the organizations started by the peace movement. However, the general school system was not discussed nationally and internationally till the end of the century (Andersson, Hinge, and Messina, 2011: 1).

Since then, conflict resolution education has broadened widely. Education for Peace came to be seen as a fundamental right of children in 1989 with the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC). Susan Fountain, a UNICEF scholar, wrote "It is significant that the framers of the CRC viewed the promotion of understanding peace and tolerance through education as a fundamental right of all children, not an optional extra-curricular activity" (Fountain, 1999: 3). At the same

time, Peace Education evolved to be used as a tool to help students deal with some of the wounds inflicted by a culture of violence. Peace educators focused more on civil, domestic, cultural, and ethnic forms of violence. This led to the establishment of several movements, including one called "New Age Healing," based on the work of Carl Rogers, which has spread and influenced peace educators worldwide (Harris, 2001: 21).

In the 1990s, David Johnson and Roger Johnson started equipping teachers with peacemaking skills. Furthermore, Lantieri and Patti focused on reducing school violence by encouraging teachers to spread peace in schools. Their achievement added fundamental elements regarding "antibias and multicultural education" (Harris, 2001: 21). In addition, the United Nations General Assembly passed two resolutions relating to Peace Education in 1998. The first one was regarding enhancing the culture of peace. The second one was "declaring the year 2000 as the International Year for The Culture of Peace, and the years 2001-2010 to be the *International Decade for a culture of peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World"* (Harris, 2001: 21; italics are in the original). Since then, UNESCO and other organizations and individuals have developed many remarkable initiatives to expand the field toward achieving peace (Harris, 2001: 21). There are more recent activities in the field of Peace Education, including the first scientific publication, *Journal of Peace Education* in 2004, the *Encyclopedia of Peace Education* in 2008 by Monisha Bajaj, "an issue of *Peace and Change,* the academic journal of the Peace History Society, was in 2009 dedicated to peace education practices in classrooms" and the *Handbook on Peace Education* in 2010 (Andersson, Hinge, and Messina, 2011: 1; italics in the original).

Since 2000 many organizations were established or started to focus on Education for Peace. The International Falcon Movement – Socialist Educational International (IFM-SEI) began concentrating on the nonviolent resolution of interpersonal conflicts through organizing many

activities and training courses due to their belief that Peace Education is more than a tool to find solutions to international crises and conflicts, but it goes way beyond that to reach the inner side of every individual's behaviour (Sudbrock and Marsh, 2015: 5). The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) established another platform to spread knowledge and experience. Since 2006 the GPPAC has been working on integrating Education for Peace in the education system through building a network of people to build peace. The GPPAC has found a Peace Education Working Group to cooperate in the process of integrating the values and the tools of Peace Education into the curriculum in many places (Ghana/West Africa, U.S., Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan) and encourage all the parties of society from civil society, Education Ministry to relevant government agencies to be part of the strategies. The effort did not stop here; they developed a peace education webinar series where Peace Education experts from all over the world have the opportunity to share and exchange skills and approaches (The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict GPPAC, 2020: 1-2).

2.2.3 Aspects of Peace Education:

In the previous section, I presented a brief overview of the history and various conceptions of what Peace Education is. In the following section, I focus on the various aspects of the Peace Education methodology. As Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2008: ix) note, "the methodology of Peace Education should include critical thinking, reflection, and participation; they are elements that should be integrated into the pedagogy of all teaching at all levels of education." It is essential for the younger generation to learn how to understand diversity, respect different points of view, tolerate the other, and that there is no absolute truth. Teaching children how to find "non-aggressive means" is important to communicate with each other. Education systems should be able

to prepare students not only to have balanced happy lives, but also to be responsible, efficient citizens in their societies. For this reason, "educators need to introduce holistic and empowering curricula that cultivate a culture of peace in each and every young mind" (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace, 2008: xiii). Therefore, some aspects of peace should be considered.

Three aspects of Peace Education (Figure 7) are key to achieving the peace and awareness we are looking for:

1-Inner peace

2- Social peace

3- Peace with nature
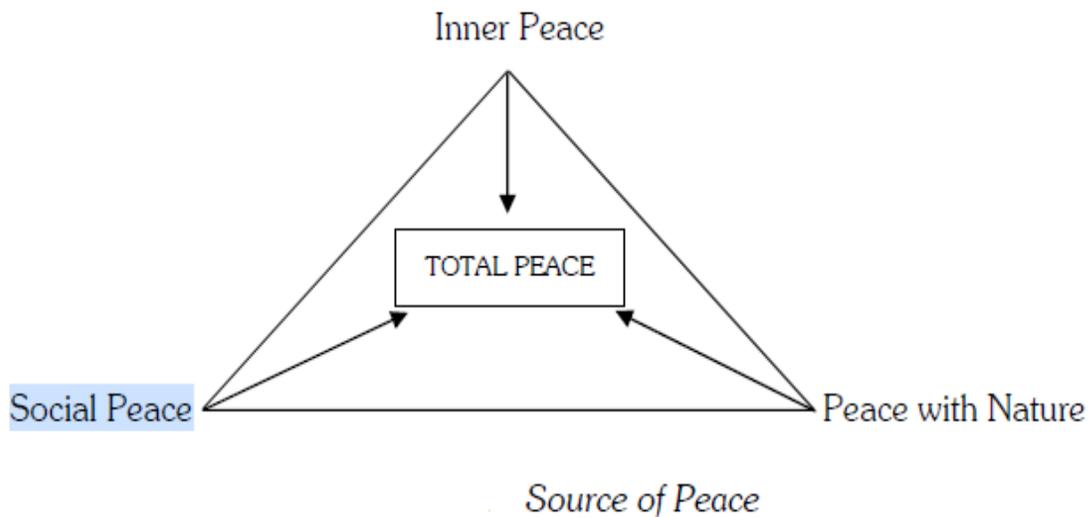
Figure 7 Source of Peace[6]

The first aspect is inner peace. It is achieving imperfect peace on the personal level or what some people call inner peace or peace of mind as an example. It has to do with the self-

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[6] UNESCO (2005), *Peace Education: Framework for Teacher Education*, India, New Delhi, UNESCO, p.15.

contentedness and the spiritual and moral side. To achieve something, you need first to recognize it, realise your need, and finally work to obtain it (while keeping in mind that no one can have perfect inner peace as nothing is ideal). The path to inner peace could be easy or difficult. That depends on the people themselves and their journeys of self-acceptance because "peace of mind is not the absence of conflict from life, but the ability to cope with it" (Shubnell, 2009: 19). When individuals achieve inner peace, their thoughts, words, and actions participate in supporting peace and a peaceful atmosphere (figure 9). If conflict is still alive inside them, it can poison their life, health, and inner peace. Leo Tolstoy wrote, "Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself" (Wall and Knights, 2013: 12). It is almost impossible to achieve outer peace without inner peace.

The second aspect is social peace, through which people learn to live together in multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-religious communities (figure 9). In the UNESCO report "Learning to live together," Learn to know, Learn to do, and Learn to be, are the four pillars of learning (UNESCO, 2014: 93). People cannot live alone and isolated from others. Living in societies is in the nature of human beings. However, we should learn how to coexist with diversity. It is important to keep in mind that for "social peace tolerance for diversity is not enough; respect and love for diversity is the precondition". Social peace seeks and works for unity, mutual understanding, conflict reconciliation, and resolution, among many others (UNESCO, 2005: 7).

The third aspect is peace with nature. It is a significant aspect of all humanity. Our world, our mother earth, is suffering, and humans are to blame. These problems are not only threatening certain places but the whole world, including all of us as well as the right of future generations to have a healthy environment. The greediness or the desire to have a luxurious life blinds most people's eyes, making them ruthlessly and carelessly exploit the earth's resources. The idea of

"more" is ruining nature. This trend toward greediness and lack of satisfaction controls many people's minds and drives their financial and environmental behaviours. Most of the time, people are unaware of the damage their desires are causing our planet. They do not realize that the environment does not only mean green cover and areas of water but rather means everything surrounding us (Ozdemir, 2002: 1, 5-7). Peace cannot be seen fragmentarily but has to be perceived holistically (UNESCO, 2005: 8) (Figure 8 and figure 9).

PEACE EDUCATION: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace
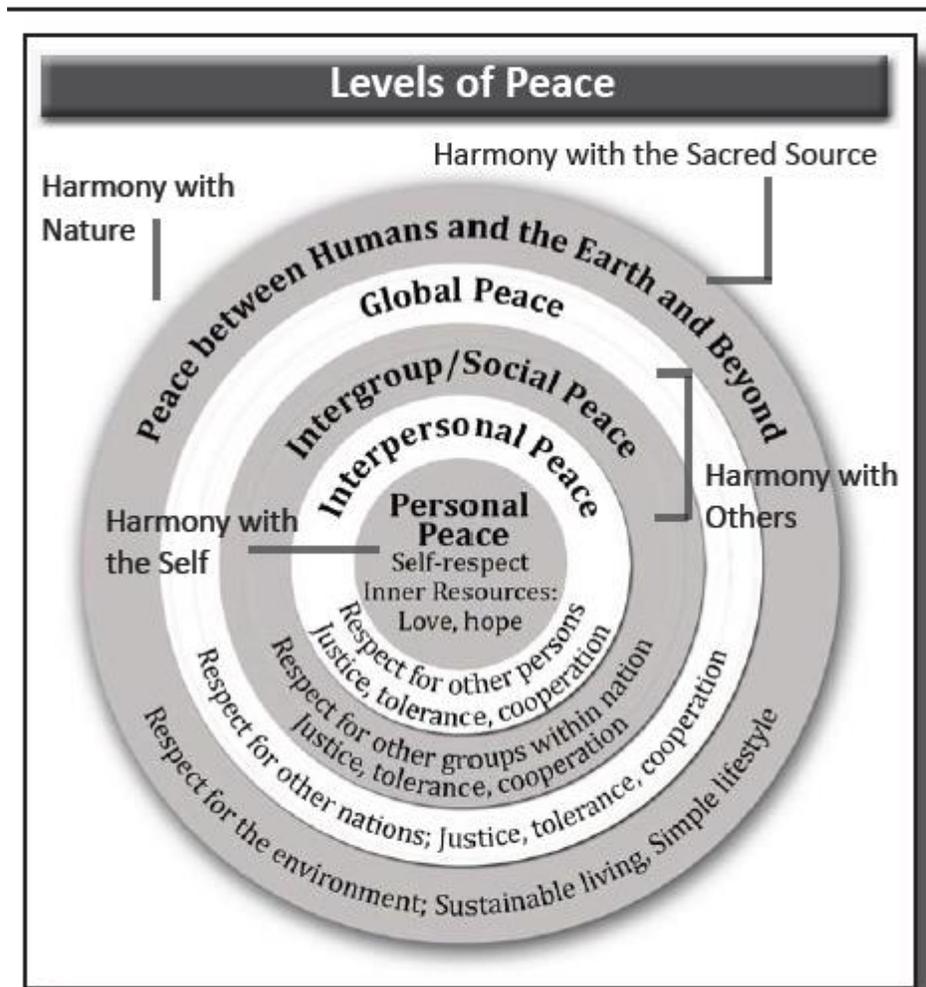
Figure 8 Levels of Peace[7]

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[7] NAVARRO-CASTRO, LORETA and JASMIN NARIO-GALACE (2010), *Peace Education: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace,* 2nd Edition, Philippines, Miriam College, Center for Peace Education, p. 21.

Figure 9 Components of Peace[8]

2.3 Integrating Education for Peace in Curriculums:

Teaching these values through Education for Peace does not need an independent subject because Education for Peace can be integrated into the regular school curriculum (figure 10). "Curriculum development in Peace Education has to follow an unconventional path... Peace Education does not derive from any known structure of knowledge. It is an interdisciplinary subject" (UNESCO, 2005: 13). Education, in all societies, is the main instrument for the "transfer and formation of worldview" (Danesh, 2011: 25), and a good curriculum is the best tool to achieve

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[8] World Peace Newsletter (2017), "PEACE 101, 201, 301 & 401 CURRICULUM", Peace Education 101, World Peace Newsletter 1996-2020 WPE, p. 3, http://www.peaceeducation101.com/, 25 October 2020.

this purpose. Education for Peace can be integrated into a primary school curriculum using a variety of techniques presented in the figure below (Figure 10): subject content, subject perspectives, teaching methods, co-curricular activities, classroom management, staff development, and finally, school management.

Integration of peace education into school total curriculum

Peace values, concepts and practices

Total Curriculum

Subject content
Subject perspectives
Teaching methods

Co-curricular activities

Classroom management
School management
Staff development
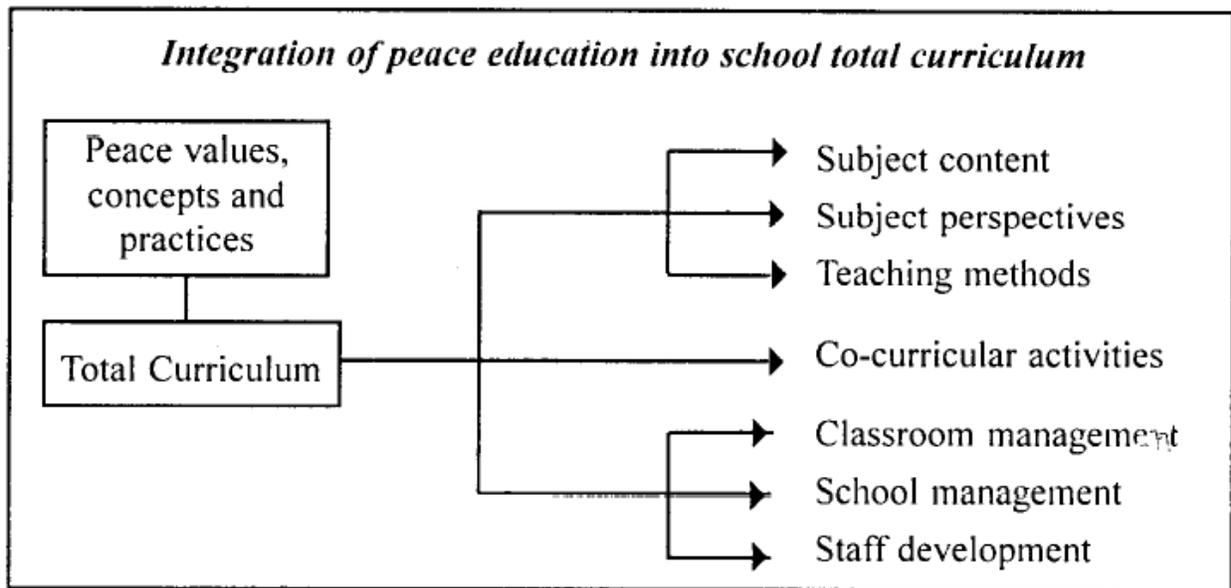
Model of integration of peace values into school curriculum

Figure 10 Model of Integration of Peace Values Into School Curriculum[9]

Peace values can be added to the lessons in different ways. They can be given directly or the values can be kept hidden and taught indirectly. During the educational process, it is crucial to deal with different attitudes and how students negatively or positively evaluate things around them, whether an object, a person, an idea, or a behaviour. For example, smoking is bad, respecting

[9] UNESCO (2001), *Learning the Way of Peace: A Teachers' Guide to Peace Education*, New Delhi, UNESCO, p.19.

others is good, and values such as love and courage represent positive human characteristics that enhance the quality of life. To teach any value to a child, the teacher needs to identify the basic elements or components of this value. Every value has three components: the cognitive or the knowledge component, the affective component, which refers to feelings, emotions, and attitudes, and finally, the behavioural component, which are skills and practices (UNESCO, 2001: 20- 22). All three have to be taught together as follows:

> A teacher has to provide the knowledge base and build the concept at first. Secondly, she has to awaken the feelings related to the value by recalling past good experiences, telling stories, etc and develop positive attitudes towards the value. Finally, behavioural skills are built through practices.
>
> (UNESCO, 2001: 22).

The concept here means a group of information put together "on the basis of commonalities" such as motherhood (UNESCO, 2001: 21). Teachers have to provide these values with positive feelings and interesting mechanisms to raise students' curiosity and make learning appealing. This will help students to widen their perspectives regarding social issues. Let us assume that the subject of the history class is about a conflict. Instead of triggering hatred, it is better to expand students' perspectives to understand the socio-economic background and political conditions that put the country in such a situation. To learn from the past, it is important to make students understand the nature of violence and its causes by considering how people tend to act under social pressures like poverty through questions raised during classes. Questions create a sense of creativity and imagination among students and a friendly atmosphere between students and teachers (UNESCO, 2001: 23).

Education for Peace has to be the concern of every one of us because the development of a curriculum is a collective effort; by teachers, parents, and students. To design a curriculum, it is

essential to analyse the current curriculum's existing values and spot the weak and strong points. By achieving that, the values and concepts needed to promote the curriculum can be realized. According to UNESCO, there are ten themes meeting important values of peace that can shape the framework of the curriculum of Education for Peace (Figure 2). These values can be integrated with school subjects and curricula (UNESCO, 2005: 18). In many schools, there is an educational program focused on morals and values in one way or another. Education for Peace can benefit from and build on these existing efforts.

2.3.1 Elements for Education for Peace Program:

2.3.1.1 Students' Needs:

The first step in designing an Education for Peace program is to identify the current needs of students. Observing students' behaviour is one way to find out some of their needs. Are they aggressive, tending to fight and complain, or are they suffering from other forms of disturbing behaviours? Every symptom can be the effect of deep-rooted reasons; if these symptoms are not dealt with seriously, they could worsen. The root of the problems can be intellectual, social, or spiritual. For example, if there is an increasing trend toward smoking, it is necessary to figure out the reason for this act. Is it an act coming from their needs to show their masculinity or imitate friends or famous actors in media, or is it due to other psychological issues? Different kinds of problems can be noticed by observing students, such as bullying or disrespectful attitudes towards teachers or students. What is about children in hot war zones? What are wars' effects on children and their needs? How education helps children. As Annelies Ollieuz of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) said, "To focus on education at the very beginning of a crisis is important: First and foremost, it's because we're talking about youth and children's futures". School protects

children and youth from war dangers such as being recruited by armed groups (Grønhaug, 2018: 3).
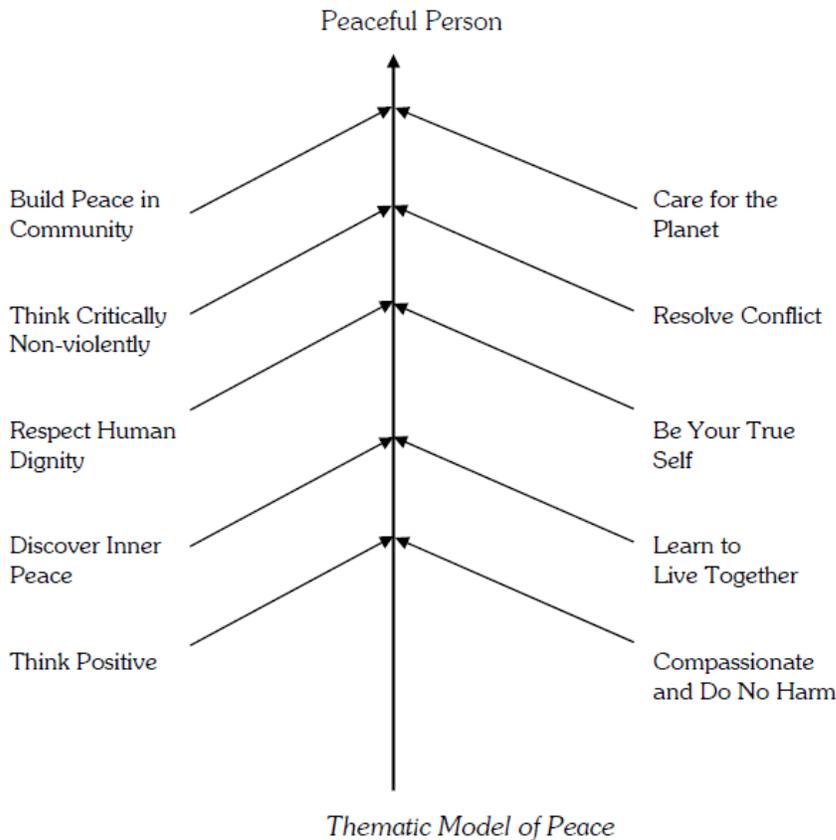
Figure 11 Thematic Model of Peace[10]

Once the needs are specified, the objectives can be set. For instance, to deal with smoking or disrespect, it is possible to start a program in schools to raise awareness of the harm of smoking or to develop the respect of others. Another solution might be to establish a counseling service at school. Teachers can also introduce new participatory learning methods or specify a time once or twice a week to allow students to express their feelings and problems to the teachers. Furthermore,

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[10] UNESCO (2005), *Peace Education: Framework for Teacher Education*, India, New Delhi, UNESCO, p. 18.

a teacher can help students relax or reload their energy by doing some energetic or intellectual activities at the beginning of class or whenever the teacher feels that students become tired, bored, or absentminded. Education for Peace does not always have to start with negative points; it can also be used to strengthen positive behaviours since increasing positive attitudes may help to decrease negative ones. Even good schools with a good educational program need to work continuously on developing "the existing school culture" (UNESCO, 2001: 13-15). In general, the needs of students can be classified into four levels. These four levels are 1) individual or self-development level, 2) school or community level, 3) national level, and 4) the global level. Each of these should be recognized while designing Education for Peace programs.

1) Individual or Self-Development Level:

At the individual level, self-development is an essential need for all children. This point is not given enough focus or consideration in most schools. To achieve self-development, a child needs to build an "effective and integrated personality" and develop positive self-esteem (UNESCO, 2005: 10). This requires empowering students by developing skills such as positive thinking, empathetic listening, communication, decision-making, and critical thinking (UNESCO, 2005: 10). For example, Paulo Freire believes that individuals should be empowered to be active cultural players in transforming the world. Similarly, Erich Fromm, in Paulo Freire's "Education for Critical Consciousness" (1973: 6), explains that an individual's ideas, feelings, and behaviours should be given a space to have their effect and not be conformed and lost. Diversity of ideas, feelings, and behaviours should be respected and valued. If society enchains individuals, they will be limited and unable to take any initiative or be creative. They will conform to others with a feeling of helplessness and incapability of achieving anything.

Conformity is taking from people the power to choose and look with a critical eye at the world. Richard Shaull, in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of The Oppressed* (1970: 33), explicated that our modern society with its technology and fast lifestyle is "making objects of most of us and subtly programming us into conformity to the logic of its system." Unfortunately, that submerges us in a new 'culture of silence' (Freire, 1970: 33). According to Shaull, the young think that the educational system of today "is their enemy," and that is due to the absence of "a *neutral* educational process" (Freire, 1970: 34; italics in the original). Education can function in two ways. It can either support conformity by being a tool that integrates the younger generations into the logic of the present system, or it can become "the practice of freedom" as a tool to manage reality critically and creatively that allows students to participate in a positive transformation of the world (Freire, 1970: 34). Many children are put under lock and key by the power of conformity to society's norms, especially in schools. They do not have the freedom of thinking or critically analysing their world, not realizing their power that could change the world. Paulo Freire tries to find new approaches to education that address these issues. In many classrooms, students are never given a chance to be involved in discussions with their teachers about the subjects they are learning, which according to Freire, makes the students "oppressed" by the teachers who are the "oppressors" (Freire, 1970: 20). As such, the students are living in a system of oppression.

Unfortunately, sometimes people involved in the system of oppression are unaware of their participation (Waldorf, 2007: 15). The teacher's task becomes only to "'fill' the students with the contents of his narration – contents which are detached from reality" (Freire, 1970: 71). The role of the students is only to receive passively, learn by heart and repeat the information given by teachers, who talk about life and reality "as if it were motionless [and] static" (Freire, 1970: 71). In this process, the teacher is the "narrator," and students are "containers" filled by the teacher

(Freire, 1970: 71- 72), and this is what Freire has termed the "banking concept of education." Paulo Freire imagines the education process as the process of depositing money in a bank. He focuses on the oppressive process of "depositing" information from official standard textbooks by teachers into the empty accounts of students. The student is responsible for comprehending the materials in the style the teacher chooses to explain the lesson, even if the information has nothing to do with the student's life. This kind of education turns students into mere "receptors" and "collectors" of data, which often has no connection to their realities (Freire, 1970: 71-72).

It appears that many school systems and teachers have adopted the concept of banking education where "the students are not called upon to know, but to memorize the contents narrated by the teacher" (Freire, 1970: 80). Many, but not all, students have experienced this type of banking system at one point or another, and I am one of them. A lot of efforts are needed to take the students who have experienced banking education for a long time out of the limited circle of this system. Introduce them to how to reflect on a subject or a topic. In addition, to positively criticize a topic they disagree with and support their arguments with convincing justifications and possible solutions. Students get used to receiving and copying information, adhering strictly to every word written in school textbooks, no word more, no word less. In many countries, they are expected to memorize every single word by heart no matter what. The main purpose of studying for many students was to answer exam questions to get high marks at school. In no time a great amount of school information will be forgotten because they do not have much connection to our real lives. For several students, some classes are boring, thus, they are mostly absent-minded. The task of transforming the mindset to follow the new education system requires assistance, guidance, and effort to widen the vision of self and world as a whole.

As Freire indicated that "Implicit in the banking concept is the assumption of a dichotomy between human beings and the world: a person is merely *in* the world, not *with* the world or with others; the individual is spectator, not re-creator" (Freire, 1970: 75). It creates a distance between teachers and students, and between students and the real world, which leads to the disappearance of students' consciousness. Based on that, "the person is not a conscious being (*corpo consciente*); he or she is rather the possessor of *a* consciousness: an empty "mind" passively open to the reception of deposits of reality from the world outside" (Freire, 1970: 75; italics in the original). In the banking system the role of educators is to manage how the world "enters into" students. It is the teacher's responsibility to plan an approach "that already occurs spontaneously" (Freire, 1970: 76).

This kind of education does not support the development of "critical consciousness," which is the blossom of students' experience through their intervention and interaction in the world as "transformers" (Freire, 1970: 73). Instead, Freire suggested using the "problem-posing" method as a solution. Problem-posing education systems allow teachers and students to talk and learn from each other. Putting such a system into action will enable students to discuss their thoughts and ideas and develop their critical understanding. It helps both teachers and students to think outside the box by questioning, investigating, and thinking creatively. Problem posing "enables teachers and students to become Subjects of the educational process by overcoming authoritarianism and an alienating intellectualism." It is a vital tool for individuals to defeat their "false perception… [and] static reality" of life to see reality through their own perspectives (Freire, 1973: 83, 86).

2) School or Community Level:

Schools should establish a peaceful culture at the institutional level to allow children to absorb the spirit of peace. This should begin by developing the attitude of a school's staff by promoting an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, appreciation, and belongingness. Furthermore, developing a friendly relationship between teachers and students based on mutual respect will positively affect the future. Applying the problem-posing method will support the school in creating a generation with problem-solving skills and broad perspectives. Changing the teacher-centered classroom approach to child-centered learning is a significant step that should be taken. Teachers have to find other tools and strategies to apply inside the classroom. They should develop creative and attractive activities and materials to create a friendly, energetic environment. The previous methods will spread peace throughout the school (UNESCO, 2005: 10).

However, the freedom given to students does not mean they have more authority in the class than the teacher. Teachers maintain the role of authority in the class; moreover, teachers are the ones who present information to students. Nevertheless, this must not prevent teachers from connecting with students and giving them the chance to analyse the provided information. Both teachers and students need to realize their own concepts, visions, and "realities" and be supported to imagine the others' realities and considerations. When the relationship between students and teachers becomes closer, the problem-posing system will simultaneously replace the banking system (Freire, 1973: 72).

3) National Level: Deep Culture:

At the national level, it is essential that schools concentrate on citizenship education, as it is an integral part of Education for Peace. Students as future citizens who have to be able to analyse

problems facing their society from realistic and healthy views. Therefore, students should be supported in understanding their society's current social, political, and economic situation. Moreover, students have to understand their responsibilities, such as supporting harmony among all different groups in their country, protecting their country's heritage, and safeguarding public property and the environment (UNESCO, 2005: 11).

To make Education for Peace more effective, it should emerge from a society's specific culture and should respect its identity, characteristics, and collective subconscious; as Johan Galtung explains, the "deep culture" of society should be considered and respected. Galtung uses "deep culture" to refer to the "collective subconscious" (Galtung, 2002: 15). Similarly, Carl Jung views deep attitudes in collectivities as "the shadow" because they are not recognized by the collectivity (Galtung, 2002: 15). People who share the same deep attitudes do not realize that they are more or less shaped similarly. Galtung is concerned with how much influence deep culture has on conflict culture. He believes that deep culture plays a vital role in shaping people's attitudes and behaviour in conflict (Galtung, 2002: 15).

To see how deep culture affects people, Galtung (2002: 17) points to the conflict over autonomy between Castile and Catalonia as well as the struggle for independence in Euskadi (the Basque country) in Spain. People are taking a stand based on their deep culture without being conscious of what is happening. That is because the subconscious is shared among many of them. However, deep culture differs from one society to another as every society has its own characteristics and own deep culture, which is evident in signs and symbols such as the names of streets, schools, and people. If the streets, areas or people are named after heroes, martyrs, or religious figures, it is a possible sign of a culture dealing with faith. For example, in Spain, many families tend to select their children's names from the Bible for saints or names connected with

history. There is a special day dedicated to each of these names. This day considers as a second birthday "*es el día de mi santo*," means "it's my saint's day" "it's my name day". During this day he or she receives congratulation from friends and family. Some saints' days are local or national holidays, such as Día de San Jordí (St. George), and Día de San Juan (St. John) (Dani, 2019). Another example, in the Arab World, in general, there is a deep culture of faith in God and his will (Waldorf, 2007: 7). God's name 'Allah' is used frequently in daily chitchat and conversations. Anyone can quickly notice phrases like "In Sha' Allah" (Waldorf, 2007: 7), "bihimaet Allah," and "Allah yeshfik," which respectively mean "If God wills," "May God protect you," and "May God heal you".

The differences in deep cultures can sometimes be diverse. To avoid misunderstanding or difficulties in finding the right door to spreading any value, it is essential to be very familiar with any community's habits, beliefs, and traditions. For example, before spreading the value of respecting others among students in a community, it is necessary to understand how this community defines respect. To make the idea clear, in Syria, for every little or big everyday matter, it is important to express frequently gratitude and appreciation even if the other person is only doing their job and not offering a favor. While in India, for instance, it is less common to verbally express thanks for little daily matters between friends and family. Instead, words of gratitude are often reserved for more important matters. Funeral and wedding traditions and habits can be good examples as well. If it is wanted to promote a value of positive attitude toward death in some communities, it is necessary to know how this community deals with death. For instance, in some Chinese villages in Tchinghiani district, Hebei Province, it is common to rent dancers to cheer people up (Arabic CNN, 2015). While in Syria, the announcement of someone's death is made by printing posters spread all over the city with the names of the relatives and the time and the place

for offering consolations for the next three days. In a calm and sad atmosphere, women and men receive condolences in separate places.

Just like funerals, wedding traditions can also highlight the diversity in cultures. For example, in most Arab countries, early marriage is still a tradition followed by many families, and the general habit is that the husband is the one who has the whole responsibility of providing for the house and the living expenses. It is not the wife's duty. However, in most western countries, the customs are quite different. Therefore, finding culturally appropriate ways to spread these values can be one effective way to prevent the marriage of minors and encourage women not to be dependent on their husbands.

4) The Global Level: Worldviews:

Reaching this point of understanding should be accompanied by introducing students to different worldviews and encouraging them to find their own worldview and understand the effect of these views on the conflicts in their lives (Waldorf, 2007: 10). Developing such an understanding takes us to the fourth aspect: the global level. At this level, it is important to highlight that all people live in one world. All of them are connected, and no one can live alone. One of the main goals of Education for Peace is to produce "a world citizen" by widening students' perspectives and visions of the world. To achieve this target, schools can raise issues like cultural diversity, racism, terrorism, gender issues, world poverty, and animal rights for discussion among students and global awareness (UNESCO, 2005: 11-12).

A worldview can be defined as how each one sees and evaluates the world around us. Generally, this provides the ground on which each of us acts and reacts in our society. Worldview includes our view of reality, human nature, life's purpose, and human relationship. Is the world

united or not? Are human beings fundamentally vicious, virtuous, or both simultaneously with a lot of struggle? Is there a purpose in life, and if so, what is it? What is the purpose of human relationships? Is it love, war, peace, success, winning, failing, hopes or happiness? Finding answers to these questions can determine our understanding of individual and collective worldviews. We can decide the widespread worldview in society by analysing the discourse and actions taken by individuals or groups in that society. Our worldviews are formed through the experiences and lessons we have received from our parents, teachers, and classmates and through the accurate and inaccurate notions and concepts of different sources, from scientific theories to media presentations. It identifies three categories of worldview in society, taking into consideration "the dynamics of development of individual and collective consciousness" (Danesh, 2011: 17, 26). These categories are present in different degrees in every individual and society, and they are survival-based, identity-based, and unity-based worldviews. These worldviews respectively reflect the features of three phases in the development of individuals and society.

Survival-based worldview or the authoritarian worldview takes place during infancy and childhood. This view can develop under any condition that makes individuals seek power for security, including poverty, physical threats and war (Danesh, 2011: 26). This worldview is characteristic of childhood because the world for children is a dangerous place where parents' protection is needed (Waldorf, 2007: 11). The distribution of power here is unequal; therefore, people in positions of authority and power work to keep it while the others who do not have authority or power try to adapt to the situation. This applies to both small groups (e.g., family, school, or workplace) and large groups (e.g., nations and religion) (Danesh, 2011: 26). Many classrooms are run in survival-based worldviews where teachers put rules to keep order. These

regulations are needed for students at a younger age, but older students need to develop a less controlled worldview and more sharing (Waldorf, 2007: 11).

An identity-based worldview arial is usually present during adolescence and early adulthood. It is the time when physical, emotional, and mental powers start flourishing. In the process of forming their identities, youth challenge the rules and authority of their society. The purpose of life is to win and be known as the best. Competition and differences for them are tools for development in the community/society. This worldview usually promotes limited unity, and nationality is a good example. Each nation tries to distinguish itself with a nice flag, national song, and national pride (Waldorf, 2007: 11). However, this worldview should be temporary.

It is important to take into consideration that different societies have different worldviews. Therefore, it is necessary that individuals develop a worldview that "reflects the concept of 'unity'" to minimize conflict (Waldorf, 2007: 10). To understand this concept of unity, we must realize our vision of the world (Waldorf, 2007: 8) because "all individuals and societies are subject to the universal laws of life—unity, development, creativity—we are able to find fundamental similarities and patterns in worldviews that cut across cultural, linguistic, religious and ideological boundaries." This worldview is based on the "fundamental issue of the consciousness of the oneness of humanity… [and] unity in diversity". The ultimate goal for this worldview is to create a culture of peace, which is "equal, just, progressive, moral, diverse and united." It is possible to develop a unity-based worldview that acknowledges all the world as part of a whole. Individuals and society are part of something bigger than themselves. People can choose to adopt a unity-based worldview. The unity-based worldview is the essence of the Education for Peace curriculum, as a unity-based education promotes not only our understanding of issues related to peace and conflict but also extends to issues of civilization and the world as a whole (Danesh, 2011: 26-28).

Unity-based Education for Peace deals with the field of peace studies from new "conceptual and practical dimensions" (Danesh, 2011: 60). Education for unity is an essential concept in building Education for Peace. It is needed to help people unite and see the big picture, to see the greater good for the society and that the world is more important than who wins or loses (Waldorf, 2007: 8). Interpersonal and intergroup conflicts and disrespecting diversity hinder achieving peace. The phenomenon of human conflict mainly concentrates on "issues of survival, security, pleasure, and individual and/or group identity." The solution can be found in achieving unity. Unity can be defined as "the main law governing all human relationships" (Danesh, 2011: 55). In this way, conflict could be described as "the absence of unity" and peace as "the process of creating unity in the context of diversity" (Danesh, 2011: xi).

Based on this notion, "An Integrative Theory of Peace" was provided, and a "comprehensive Unity-Based Peace Education program—Education for Peace—has been formulated." According to Danesh, this program was applied in over 100 schools with promising results (Danesh, 2011: 55). IPT (The Integrative Theory of Peace) comes from the belief that peace is a combination of a "psychological, social, political, ethical, and spiritual state with expressions at intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, international, and global areas of human life" (Danesh, 2008: 2). Dr. Hossain Danesh contends that unity is in human nature, and all humanity is interconnected. He understands the aim of unity as "*a conscious and purposeful condition of convergence of two or more unique entities in a state of harmony, integration, and cooperation to create a new evolving entity or entities, usually of a same or higher nature*" (Danesh and Danesh, 2002: 7; italics are in the original).

Usually, the work of united people is of high quality and standards. This can explain why people work to establish relationships like friendship and marriage and why humans have

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developed high technology to connect people worldwide. Religions are another example of unity, as unity is mentioned in most monotheistic religions to aim for a better life. All creatures were created by God and are linked together in universal unity. However, some people only feel unity with those similar to them, like those sharing the same beliefs, racial background, nationality, or culture. Sometimes small or limited unity can be dangerous and cause conflict. For some people, the importance of unity with the state, a religious group, or even a gang group outweighs the unity of all humanity. It is important to keep in mind that, as long as there are communities that develop a sense of limited unity and put it ahead of the universal unity, it is necessary to develop an appreciation of diversity, which is a significant stone in the process of understanding the universal unity (Waldorf, 2007: 9). Some people believe that sometimes conflict is necessary to enhance awareness and growth to achieve peace. But Danesh suggests that education will make individuals and groups reach awareness and growth through the perspective of unity without the need of having conflict or violence.

2.4 Education for Peace Program in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

2.4.1 Situation and Hinders:

An example of a tailor-made curriculum for Peace Education is the Education for Peace Program applied in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Society was deeply divided after the country had been torn apart by conflict for years. Before shedding light on this experience, a brief picture of BiH society will be explained, highlighting the educational system's situation.

The society of BiH has a history of cruel civil war. Education faces many challenges, including social and psychological trauma, poverty, and the lack of security. Almost everyone had lost some family members during the BiH civil war. Many children lost beloved ones at an early

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age. There were significant numbers of displaced families and internal refugees. People were living in a circle of fear and distrust. They were leading a difficult life with an unclear future. Before the war, schools were integrated, and there was no problem with racial and ethnic discrimination. Many schools were partially or fully damaged during the war or converted to serve other purposes. Schools became full of misleading ideologies that supported ethnic, racism, and prejudices. Combined with the economic crisis, this led to bad quality education and a negative environment for both teachers and students. The curriculum was different from one region to another. The ethnic hostility was reflected in the materials. Teachers, especially recent graduates, were not equipped with skills of post-conflict teaching methods or how to deal with the challenges resulting from the crisis (Danesh, 2011: 29).

Dr. José Ángel Ruiz [11], the author of *Balcanes, la herida abierta de Europa; Conflicto y reconstrucción de la convivencia* (2010), argues that Peace Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina needs a lot of work to be "consolidated". Many elements were impeding the progress of Peace Education in the region, and many of them are related to teachers. Unfortunately, many unqualified teachers acquired their jobs due to their good connections. Most of them do not have "a solid educational background" due to the poor education system since the 1990s. Furthermore, those working in the public sector with fixed-term contracts (permanent posts) do not have enough motivation to improve their skills. The income for teachers, especially those working in the public sector, is low. There is a widespread belief that without the right connections, the chances of getting promoted are meager, even if a teacher is qualified with the right skills. The atmosphere in the class itself is not encouraging. It is not only teachers who are not motivated but also students. The high percentage of unemployment among youth, which leads to many suicide cases, makes

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[11] Interview with Dr. José Ángel Ruiz Jiménez, Spain, 10 January 2016.

many students pessimistic about their future, fearing that a university degree won't guarantee a good job and a better future. Therefore, newly graduated students long to travel abroad for better opportunities (Ruiz Jiménez, 2010).

Another element hindering Peace Education is the curriculum. For example, there are many versions of school history books. Each ethnic group (Bosnian, Croat, or Serbian) has their book in which they blame and put the responsibility for the horror that happened during the war on the other groups. Besides that, teaching the program in three languages (Bosnian, Croat, and Serbian) increases nationalism and deepens the differences among the citizens. Dr. Ruiz Jiménez further argues that it is not only the education system that does not support Peace Education; society also has a significant share in the responsibility. A generation of children has grown up in a climate full of horrible stories about war crimes. Seeds of hatred are spread daily at the dining table in almost every house, and these seeds are taking away any chance of accepting the others. For Ángel, the media is also a potent player in increasing nationalism. Politicians often use the media to portray the other as the enemy[12].

2.4.2   The Education for Peace initiative:

Danish gave an overview of the two countries' situations during and after the war (Danesh, 2011). The Bosnia and Herzegovina war lasted three years, and it needed five years after the war was ended to start a vital initiative for Peace Education. It took a collective effort from members of the society who first realized the great need for a better education system; then, they recognized that to achieve it, they have to unite with each other to do something to save the coming generation. Those members put a plan analysing the society's current situation, socially, traditionally,

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[12] Interview with Dr. José Ángel Ruiz Jiménez, Spain, 10 January 2016.

politically, economically, and culturally to start a collective initiation using all members of society. They knew what was needed for their society to begin this process. The civil society, the education society, and the political society united in pointing out the problem and finding the solution. All of them designed their practical method for their education system for their generation who lived in war. In May 2000, with the cooperation of a group of teachers, school directors, parents, education leaders, and Ministers from the three ethnic populations, the Education for Peace Program was started with six primary and secondary schools (primary grades from 1 to 8 and secondary grades from 9 to 12) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The locations of these schools included all three groups of this war-torn country. A few months later, the program was applied in 112 schools with around 80,000 students, 5,000 teachers, and 130,000 parents and guardians from the three main BiH ethnic groups who were parts of the civil war of 1992–1995: Bosnian (Muslim), Croat (Catholic), and Serb (Orthodox Christian). Furthermore, the Peace Education program focuses on four main functions: to help a school community's members reflect on their worldview and develop a "peace-based worldview"; to support creating a culture of peace in school communities; to develop a "culture of healing" to recover from the impact of the conflict effectively; and finally to learn how to avoid new conflicts and the skills of peaceful conflict transformation (2011: 30-32). Based on that, despite the obstacles mentioned above that hinder the implementation of Peace Education, the Education for Peace Program has been applied to many schools and thousands of students in Bosnia and Herzegovina with successful results promoting coexistence.

The curriculum contains vital elements, including leadership skills for peace to prepare students to be future peacemakers. Education for Peace EFP supports the development of the necessary skills and knowledge for violence-free and peaceful environments, from home to schools

and workplaces. Empowering girls and women and giving boys and men the guidance and preparation needed to prevent power-based abuse and violence is another critical point in EFP. In addition, the program strengthens other skills like interethnic dialogue. The curriculum is prepared to have a peace framework in all subjects (biology, history, social studies, math, music, and others) to be examined and connected with life and other related matters. The curriculum is based on the latest research and literature on Peace Education and other fields, including "psychology, education methodology, political science, sociology, law, religious studies, history, conflict resolution, the art". Teachers are prepared to understand the concepts of peace and integrate them into lessons and activities using EFP's "Understanding-Oriented approach" (Danesh, 2011: 32-33, 60, 207).

Achieving a culture of peace among the participating school communities' members requires building an 'atmosphere of trust' among them using specific strategies. One of these strategies profoundly influences their personal and group worldview and the part they can play in conflict and peace. In this way, students are given a chance to analyse and examine their classes and subjects:

> How the history books would be different if they were to be written within the framework of a unity-based worldview rather than conflict-based worldviews, as they are written now? How geography or biology or literature, or religious studies textbooks would alter? How our approach to economics, political science, and sociology would change? In doing so, students and teachers alike, become painfully aware of the bias with which they study various arts and science. And this bias is always in favour of conflict. In school textbooks, everywhere, conflict rules supreme!
>
> (Danesh. 2011: 31)

BiH students are like most children worldwide, whose education is within a conflict-based worldview framework. With this strategy, students and teachers start questioning issues that are taken for granted. This is a crucial step in Peace Education.

Another strategy is spreading trust in the school community through shared activities with peace-oriented aims. These activities can be held during the academic year and can be done at many levels (local, regional, and statewide). Students, under their teachers' guidance and supervision, participate in these events with some displays. They use art such as painting, dance, or drama to address themes related to important issues concerning society like "family relationships, gender equality, unity in diversity, interethnic and inter-religious harmony, the environment". Through these events, students are given the opportunity to become their parents' instructors and the whole audience of the larger communities. All the community members are involved in these activities and events, sharing the impact of a unity-based worldview on all aspects of life. Besides the local event, a delegation of students, teachers, and parents from each EFP school travels to visit another city to participate in the regional and national activities. All parts and groups of society, from students to the media, participate in these events of peace celebration, sharing their happiness and grief to cure the wounds and establish stable and healthy relationships toward a culture of healing (Danesh, 2011: 31).

To create a culture of healing, many steps are required, including achieving mutual trust and meeting the fundamental human needs of "security, identity, and meaning", and finally, "hope for a better future and optimism" to peacefully overcome challenges. These elements are needed to achieve "*unity*" for "physical, psychological, social, moral, and spiritual healing". The EFP program in BiH schools illustrates that when a culture of peace and a culture of peace a culture of peace are achieved, "*a culture of excellence*" arises. The culture of excellence is evident in a supportive atmosphere where the entire school community promotes all kinds of achievements (Danesh, 2011: 33, 59; italics in the original).

2.4.3   Evaluation and Result:

This evaluation highlighted the success and the challenging points of the Education for Peace Program. For example, it is not always an easy process with the current curriculum; mainly history as a school subject it is "hard to find the thread that brings people together" or to support the building of a culture full of imperfect peaces. The participants' writings in the evaluation were candid, deep, touching, and full of "pride". Through their stories, they explained how the Peace Education program has widened their vision and made them think differently and more positively. One of the students wrote, "I realized how a rich person is the one who knows to forgive, to love, and to enjoy small things." This program has shown them how to deal with past mistakes. It is essential to keep these mistakes in mind to learn from them "how to proceed" and how to avoid repeating them in the future (Danesh, 2011: 278- 279). The participants started with understanding the unity concept in a way they can practice it in their daily life, especially regarding "unity in diversity" and conflict transformation. This vision was clearly explained through the few lines one of the participating students wrote for the evaluation:

> Before participating in this program I had different opinions about other religions. I thought that Bosniaks and Serbs were some strange people with whom there should not be any communication. I formed that opinion because I was listening to the people older than me. Participation in the program "Education for Peace" gave me chances to form my own opinion.
>
> (Danesh, 2011: 278).

The evaluation result showed that the peace program had established the basis of "an inter-ethnic harmony" in the communities of the involved schools. More trust gradually started spreading in and between these communities. Old friendships began to be re-established. One of the teachers explained that "one day, something strange happened inside of me…I decided to go

to my former school and visit all those people that I had once loved. 'Education for Peace' has helped me to change my views of the past". All the teacher needed was some strength to take the first steps in opening a new horizon. It is not only students and teachers who started thinking differently. One of the students expresses his happiness in a few words, showing that the peace program has changed the perspectives of his family and the way they deal with daily life issues as well:

> The things in my family have changed. Before I met with this program, when I would say to my mother that I have met [a] Serb or Croat, she would get upset. Her fear that something would happen to me was obvious. And now the situation has changed. When I would come home and say that I have [a] friend that is Serb, she would just smile.
>
> (Danesh, 2011: 278- 279).

The concepts and values of Peace Education should be included in childhood education. One participant believed that teaching children about the principles of peace from an early age is essential because "Peace is not granted, peace needs to be learned about". The program does not force the values and principle of peace on students but instead encourages and guides them to learn about these values through games and other creative activities in self-discovery. For many, this experience is summarized in two lines by one of the students: "This program encouraged me to think… Every person deserves a chance… I am very happy that this program is being implemented in our school" (Danesh, 2011: 279).

It is hard to evaluate the outcomes of the peace program because the results are "transformative, spiritual, personal, social and educational objectives" which cannot measure by math; this result overpasses the "feedback sheets/tick the box" of evaluation techniques. To better understand the practical and transformative process, alternative methods reflect the influence of

the Program of Peace Education on people's lives, and perspectives are needed. Therefore, the evaluation that has been carried out depends on more effective approaches such as writing stories, individual and group interviews, and brainstorming (Danesh, 2011: 275).

Peace Education is not ideal or platonic. It is practical and applicable if all members of society cooperate to support it. Its values exist at the core of human values. Peace Education must emerge from the needs of a community while respecting its culture and heritage to focus on possible solutions. School is the best tool to be used as a lighthouse. The light is Peace Education, and the shore is imperfect peaces.

2.5 Conclusion:

Education is the backbone of a society's progress. It not only provides us with information but also develops the individual capacities to accomplish their responsibilities. "It makes our life in harmony with all existence" (SHIKSHA Finance, 2020: i). Education for Peace is the soul of education and a key element in intellectual transformation. It creates a generation that initiates advancement and searches for creativity. Education for Peace goes beyond conflicts and peaceful transformation. It aims for two goals. For the short-term goal, educators deliver information about the conflicts and the planned strategies to resolve violence. In the long term, educators work to illuminate students through planting nonviolence seeds for a broad perspective of "peaceful conflict transformation and nonviolent alternatives" (Harris, 2009: 1).

Education for Peace supports the building of imperfect peaces in realistic ways. It is a tool for fostering conflict transformation, national and international understanding, social justice, human rights, life skills, and environmental awareness, which help develop a culture of peace in learners. The nonviolent methods and strategies of Education for Peace existed over the years and

were practiced both formally and informally. It lived for thousands of years in the form of tales, songs, proverbs, and other cultural practices to establish many imperfect peaces throughout history. The human being's history is full of conflicts and resolution strategies to avoid/solve conflicts.

Education for Peace was started with religion in the teaching of prophets and continued with spiritual figures. The modern peace movement contra war started in the 19th century. Thinkers and educators such as Rousseau, Tolstoy, Jane Addams, and Maria Montessori worked to keep the method of Education for Peace on the map. Jane Addams calls for connecting class materials with the real-life and the breakdown of gender norms. After World War II, people understood the importance of having education focusing on peace at the individual, national and international levels. "Since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defense of peace must be constructed" (UNESCO, 1947: 276). Since 1945 many peace research centers and academic programs have taken place. During the 1980s, there was a holistic approach to Education for Peace concentrating on the role of school, family, and society to highlight problems this era suffered from, including domestic violence and war. In 1989 with the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC), Peace Education became a fundamental right of all children.

Education for Peace becomes a tool to help heal children's wounds. That leads to the establishment of many movements such as "New Age Healing." In the 1990s, teachers started equipped with peacemaking skills and were encouraged to spread peace in schools and add new elements like multicultural education. In 1998, General Assembly passed two resolutions relating to Education for Peace. Since then, UNESCO and other organizations and individuals have achieved remarkable initiatives to expand the field, such as The Handbook on Peace Education in

2010. Several organizations were established or started to focus on Education for Peace, such as The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC).

The methodology of Peace Education should introduce holistic and empowering curricula that cultivate a culture of peace. Furthermore, it should be integrated into the pedagogy at all levels. Education for Peace can be integrated into a primary school curriculum using various techniques, including subject content, subject perspectives, teaching methods, co-curricular activities, staff development, and school management. Three aspects of Education for Peace are crucial to achieving peace: 1-Inner peace, 2- Social peace, and 3- Peace with nature. Developing a curriculum that supports Education for Peace is a collective effort; by teachers, parents, and students. Observing students' behaviour and need, is essential in designing a curriculum for Education for Peace. Once the needs are specified, the objectives can be set.

The needs of students can be classified into four levels, 1) individual or self-development level, 2) school or community level, 3) national level, and 4) the global level. Education can function in two ways. It can be a tool that integrates the younger generations into the logic of the present system or a tool that allows students to participate in a positive transformation of the world. Unfortunately, in many classrooms, students are never given a chance to be involved in discussions which makes the students "oppressed" by the teachers who are the "oppressors" (Freire, 1970: 20). The role of the students is only to receive passively as "collectors" of data in a banking education system with no connection to their reality. That leads to a distance between teachers and students, between students and the real world, and the disappearance of students' perception and critical consciousness. Schools should establish a peaceful culture by promoting an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, appreciation, and belongingness and developing a friendly relationship between

teachers and students based on mutual respect. The gap between them will minimize; the teacher no longer "knows everything and the students know nothing" (Freire, 1970: 73, 77).

Education must consider the "deep culture" of society. Deep culture has a powerful influence in shaping people's attitudes and behaviour in conflict. Furthermore, it works on finding culturally appropriate ways to spread Education for Peace values. Introducing students to different worldviews encourages them to discover their worldviews and understand their effects on the conflicts in their lives. Worldview includes our view of reality, human nature, life's purpose, and human relationships. The categories of worldviews, namely survival-based, identity-based, and unity-based worldviews, reflect three phases in the development of individuals and society.

With the cooperation of efforts, the Education for Peace Program in Bosnia and Herzegovina was initiated. The program focused on four main functions: to help a school community's members develop a peace-based worldview; to support creating a culture of peace; to create a culture of healing; and finally, to learn the skills of peaceful conflict transformation (2011: 30-32). The curriculum is prepared to have a peace framework in all subjects and connected with life and other related matters. The curriculum is based on the latest research and literature on Peace Education and other fields. Teachers were trained to understand how to integrate principles of peace into their lessons. The teaching staff worked on achieving a culture of peace and creating a healing culture at school. When a culture of peace and healing is completed, a culture of excellence will emerge. The case study highlighted the success achieved through this program. It demonstrated how to deal with past mistakes, keep them in mind and learn how to proceed and avoid repeating them (Danesh, 2011: 275- 278).

The example of Peace Education in schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina shows that this is a real possibility and not just a pipe dream. Many teaching methodologies can be applied to any

aspect and subject of a school curriculum and become part of the school program. It provides educators with practical tools and guidelines for peaceful conflict transformation. Such an education system could participate in building a self-reliant, egalitarian, peaceful, cooperative, and progressive nation. This kind of education requires a collective effort at the individual, community, national and global levels.

In the next chapter, the education system in the Arab States is examined. Arab countries are missing an educational system designed to teach Education for Peace, especially given the current situation (Faour and Muasher, 2011: 5). It provides an overview of the general situation, then highlights the obstacles and challenges the Arab States face in developing an education system for Peace.

Chapter Three

Current Situation of Education in the Arab World

Figure 12 Students at the School in the Study[13]

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[13] Photo from the school in study, 2022. Consent was obtained from the consent legal guardians of the children.

If you are thinking a year ahead, plant a seed.
If you are thinking a decade ahead, plant a tree.
If you are thinking a century ahead, educate the people.

(Chinese proverb in Samuelsson and Kaga, 2008: 19; italics are in the original)

3.1 Introduction:

3.1.1   The Arab World and the State of Education:

The Arab world is in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and includes 22 countries. They are, in alphabetical order, Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (ADC, 2009).

Figure 13 Map of The Arab World[14]

"The collection of Arab countries in the world is also known as the Arab world, Arab nations, Arab states, or the Arab homeland" (World Population Review, 2022). The Arab countries have a total population of around 424 million inhabitants. These countries combined extend over five

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[14] Research Gate (2016), *Map of The Arab World*, Research Gate Net, https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-the-Arab-World_fig1_305584980, 10 June 2022.

million square miles (World Population Review, 2022). "Arab countries have a rich diversity of ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities" that include Kurds, Armenians, and Berbers, among others. The two largest religions in the Arab world are Islam and Christianity, in addition to Judaism (ADC, 2009: 1).

Small drops of water should never be underestimated. If they find the right path, these small drops can form a gigantic waterfall with a strong impact; they could create a source of life. Notwithstanding the considerable growth that occurred across the Arab States in the field of education in primary education, the quality of education continues to lag. With the challenges the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have faced and continue to face, there is a need for well-designed curricula to suit the current situation and help children overcome the trauma they have lived through and rebuild their country in peace and understanding.

The Arab world considers education an effective tool for evolving societies. Since the turn of the century, education in the Arab world has grown significantly in quantitative terms, especially in terms of enrollments in elementary schools, dropout rates, and gender balance. The Arab States have accomplished essential steps in advancing the education field such as commitments to achieve the six goals of the Dakar Education Framework for Action (UNESCO-Regional Bureau Beirut, 2008: 7).

Despite the progress that has been made to date, considerable challenges remain in the educational system, especially during the last decades. Several Arab countries have been facing acute crises. Significant gaps still exist in the education system. Approximately 5 million school-aged children remain out of school in the region. The educational system focuses on "quantitative" rather than "quality" (Muasher, and Brown, 2018: 55). The report of the Arab Human

Development found that "Overall, the quality of education is poor" (United Nations Development Program, 2016: 31).

Studying the statute of education in the Arab region required investigating many aspects on different approaches. The educational system needs to be examined from a holistic and atomistic approach because the education systems reflect the characteristics of each country whereby the quality of education varies significantly within each country between high and low-income, urban and rural populations.

This chapter aims to analyse the schooling system in the Arab States. It focuses on the education delivered and highlights early childhood education's importance. In addition, it underlines the importance of a curriculum that equips children with the needed support and skills for a sustainable and prosperous society. This chapter illustrates the efforts put into improving the quality of education in the Arab region during the twentieth century and demonstrates the reasons for not meeting the aimed targets, along with the tragic effects of conflicts and the many crises the region continues to endure.

The chapter explores the educational system in Syrian and in the Arab countries. The following chapters include a case study of a primary school in Syria. This study was in progress from 2015 until 2021; it was prepared during a time when the Arab region was in severe conflict. Syria was and is still going through one of the most complex, strenuous, and longest crises in modern history.

The Syrian government has always given education in all its stages a priority and high importance. The efforts have focused on improving education at the quantitative and qualitative levels in order to respond to the requirements of student development. The policy is keen on developing curricula, knowledge and science, and introducing new scientific materials such as

technology and computers in order to develop students' abilities and keep pace with modern globalisation. Unfortunately, the crisis that Syria is going through has severely affected the situation of education, mainly the education of children and youth. Schools have been damaged, a high dropout rate of students all over the country and countless difficulties are faced by students, especially the students who are displaced (Haddad, 2015: 1).

3.2 The Importance of Education to Children and Society:

Our children of today are the pillars of tomorrow. Social, emotional, and cognitive development starts from an early age. Putting much attention to childhood and taking care of children's development and education by teaching them different skills and values is a successful investment to build a balanced society. At a young age, the central values taught to students will stay and continue to affect their ethical behaviours and choice-making into adulthood. To achieve this aim, these values need to be included in the school program from an early age through a curriculum focused on the importance of these principles. In other words, a program of Education for Peace in childhood education is necessary for a fruitful future (Agnihotri, 2018: 26).

The International Commission on Education has suggested four pillars as the foundation of education for the twenty-first century: "learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together, learning to live with others" (Barry, 2000: 45). Education should teach students how to learn, use what they learn, and evaluate and analyse. The goal of education does not only lie in providing individuals with the chance to access knowledge but also in "achieving a learning society based on acquisition, renewal, and use of knowledge" (Barry, 2000: 45; italics in the original). It is an essential key to building on children's potential, dreams, hopes, and future.

Technological advances and inventions have contributed significantly to world development, during this millennium, including education. However, the economic crisis of 2008-2009 "accelerated the rising poverty levels posing severe threats to progress in all areas of human development. Education and its development are more than ever at a very critical stage" (Chinapah et al., 2013: 40). Due to that, funding for educational purposes is vulnerable worldwide despite the critical importance of education in times like this to support developing the individual's coping skills and social levels during the global crisis. For this purpose, remarkable efforts were invested mainly since the World Conference on Education for All (WCEA), held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, then the World Forum of Education for All in Dakar in 2000, and The World Education Forum at Incheon 2015. However, serious challenges are still in the way of improving the quality of education provided (Chinapah et al., 2013: 40).

The World Education Forum (WEF) in (Dakar 2000) and The World Education Forum held in the Republic of Korea in 2015, included this concept as one of their six major goals to meet the learning needs of all children, youth, and adults. Many impressive commitments have been carried out towards the achievement of the six goals of the Dakar Education Framework for Action, Education for All, which are: Goal 1: Expand early childhood care and education. Goal 2: Provide complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality for all. Goal 3: Achieve equal access to learning and life skills platform for young people and adults. Goal 4: Improve adult literacy mainly for girls by 50 per cent. Goal 5: put an end of gender disparity and fulfill gender equality. Goal 6 of the agreement is: Develop the quality of education (UNESCO, 2000: 15- 17).

The learning process begins from birth throughout our life and includes quality formal, non-formal, and informal learning. The WEF at Incheon 2015 asserted "recognising the critical role of education for social, economic and environmental justice and the indivisibility of human

rights." The Incheon Declaration pledges to ensure the delivery of 12 years of free public equality and quality primary and secondary education, including at least nine years of compulsory education (UNESCO, 2015: 69-73) "Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills" (Barry, 2000: 17).

A successful education system is needed for children to use the education they are receiving. Achieving this kind of education requires cultural, structural, and curricular changes. It is explained clearly in the goals of the Dakar Framework for Action:

The Education 2030 agenda: in Incheon Declaration, Article 5

> …is inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity; social justice; inclusion; protection; cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity; and shared responsibility and accountability. We reaffirm that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights. It is essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfilment and sustainable development.
> (UNESCO, 2015: 12).

> Successful education programmes require: (1) healthy, well-nourished and motivated students; (2) well-trained teachers and active learning techniques; (3) adequate facilities and learning materials; (4) a relevant curriculum that can be taught and learned in a local language and builds upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers and learners; (5) an environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender-sensitive, healthy and safe; (6) a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values; (7) participatory governance and management; and (8) respect for and engagement with local communities and cultures.
> (Barry, 2000: 17).

This framework and implementing these goals are particularly important for learners because early education affects children's behavioral development. Children and young learners develop their fundamental values, attitudes, skills, and behaviours at an early stage, which affect their entire lives. Studies have demonstrated that young children have the ability to learn about racial stereotypes and understand cultural messages (such as wealth and inequality). Education helps children develop reason, emotion, social care, and physical and psychological stability. It is

the infrastructure for a healthy developed society. Cultural diversity, the wise use of resources, gender equality, democracy, and many more values and skills are the seeds that need to be planted in children. Education allows lifelong learning (Samuelsson and Kaga, 2008: 12).

Education is central to achieve sustainable development. Technology, political and financial tools are unable to achieve sustainable development alone. It is a collaboration cross-sectoral effort starts with education. However, not any type of education, it requires an education that "addresses the interdependence of environment, economy and society, and helps bring about the fundamental change of mindsets needed to trigger action for sustainable development" (UNESCO, 2015: 12). Education increase awareness and equips people with tools to a better present and future.

Therefore, improvements should be made in the early stages of education, especially at the primary level. This requires cooperation between educators, schools, governments, communities, and parents. Only with collaboration will children have the opportunities to flourish, understand, and develop the principle of peace, equality, fairness, love, and citizenship (Kelly, 2013: 25-26).

Despite the growth of admission to formal education, the progress evaluation given by the National Education Framework for Action EFA Review and the Global EFA Monitoring Report 2015 since 2000 manifest "the large extent to which we have collectively failed to reach EFA goals or even the much narrower goal of universalizing primary education" (UNESCO, 2015: 1).

3.3 The Situation of Education in Arab States Region:

Studying the situation of education in the Arab region requires deep, into details research. The educational situation needs to be investigated from a holistic and a granular approach. It is

related to many aspects in each country including economic situations, and its culture, history, and values. A study was conducted between 1990 and 2010 related to the average levels of educational attainment in the world; the Arab region has recorded the fastest increase in comparison to other regions (Barro and Lee, 2010: 8). Over the last decade, the Arab States region has accomplished important steps in improving education. Many commitments have been carried out toward achieving the six goals of the Dakar Education Framework for Action (UNESCO- Regional Bureau Beirut, 2008: 7). Many general reports for UNESCO show that there has been a significant improvement from decreasing the gender gap to having higher enrolment rates in a good number of countries. The same result can be seen in the outcome of the UNESCO-Beirut Quality Study from the National Education Framework for Action EFA in the 2008 report for the period of mid-term review (2000-2007). The numbers showed substantial progress in many member states. In Jordan, UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar, efforts were put into constructing school buildings and providing access to good services such as clean water and working on reducing students' class density (UNESCO- Regional Bureau Beirut, 2008: 52).

However, despite all the successes achieved by the end of the twentieth century, the quality of education still has not reached expectations. Unfortunately, the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) project results show that the quality of primary education in the Arab world is poor and incapable of providing students with basic learning needs. The main consideration of many projects simply was having more schools rather than building effective education programs. In particular, programs are lacking in essential skill components. Elements related to skills like vocational training, health, environment and citizenship education, and other basic skills related to the quality of life have not been paid sufficient attention to (Barry, 2000: 47).

According to UNESCO and Arab Regional Support Group for Education 2030, unfortunately, these improvements in many countries in the Arab region reversed remarkably due to conflict and crisis and their enormous effects on all social, economic and political sectors. The national education system faces many challenges in providing quality education needed for individual, economic and social development (UNESCO, 2018: 2). It is known that crises create socio-economic vulnerabilities and when the demand for socio-economic vulnerabilities increases, the priority of education reduces. Having access to quality essential learning opportunities becomes a challenge. Significant challenges are facing the Arab States' education system. All these challenges and difficulties are connected like a circle; each could be the reason or the result of other problems. For instance, dropping out of school could be the result of poverty, and poverty could be the result of dropping out of school. Some of these challenges are explored briefly in the following sections to give a general idea about the situation of the education system in the Arab world.

3.3.1 High Dropout Rate:

The low quality of education may be the reason for a high dropout rate. Parents are willing to invest in education even if there are difficulties or they are under a limited budget when they are convinced and happy with the schooling their children receive. Equally, students, even those who need to work to support their families, will put more effort into staying at school if they are happy and comfortable with the school environment and the benefits they are receiving.

The benefits and outcomes of attending school are critical to heads of the house. An education that encourages students to learn and commit to studying improves their skills, not only in the labour market but also for society. It is a significant aspect in motivating parents and children

to continue schooling and prevent and decrease the present age of dropout of school. According to a report by UNICEF, three points parents seriously consider in their decisions regarding schooling and continuing the learning process; are among education for peace goals:

- The relevance of education
- The ability of the school to respond to diversity among pupils
- The school climate (environment) (UNICEF, 2014b: 61).

One key goal is to increase enrolment. However, progress in primary school has been relatively slow. It is true that the number of children going to school has been growing in a steady rhythm since 1999, but the drop-out rates are still high in many countries. The study established by UNICEF in 2014- 2015 (see figure 14 and figure 15) shows a large percentage of children at the beginning of 2000 in countries like Syria, Lebanon, and Tunisia remaining in school (UNICEF, 2014b, 28). However, with the crisis these countries went through, and according to a study by UNESCO Institute for Statistics annual education survey in 2020, the number of out-of-school children severely increased (UNESCO, 2020).

Share of children of pre-primary school age who are not enrolled in pre-primary or primary education in 2013, by country

Country	Not in school	In pre-primary or primary
Yemen	94	6
Djibouti	93	7
Iraq	83	17
Egypt	63	37
Palestine	52	48
Sudan	50	50
Jordan	48	52
Oman	41	59
Syria	41	59
Bahrain	31	69
Tunisia	30	70
Morocco	28	72
UAE	20	80
Qatar	19	81
Algeria	16	84
Kuwait	12	88
Lebanon	2	98
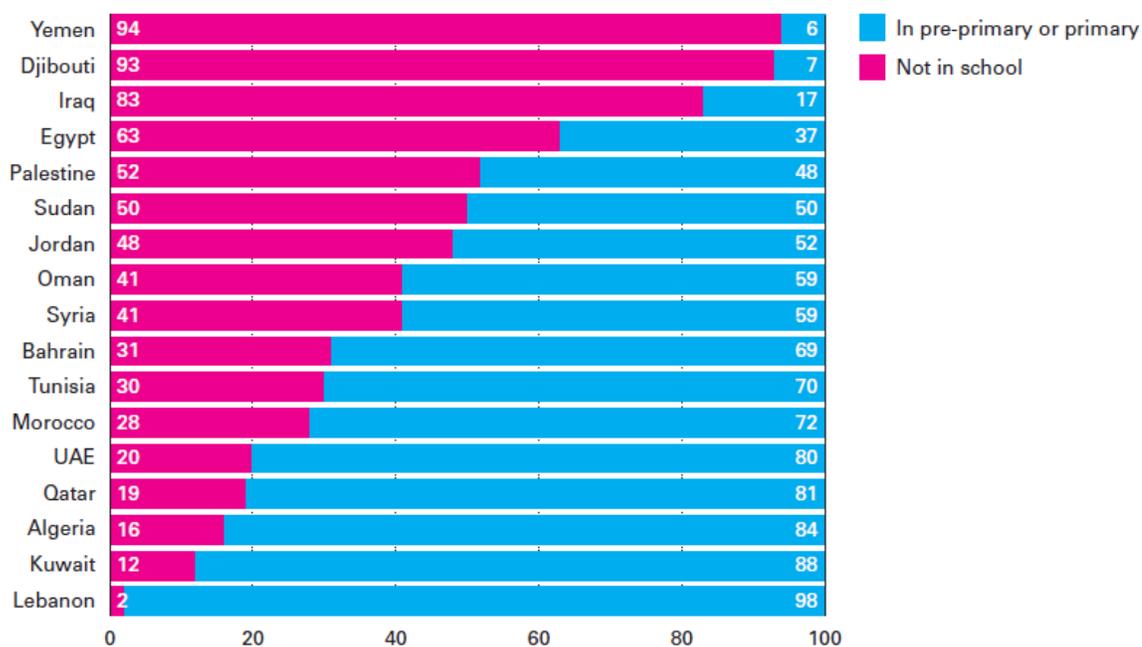
Figure 14 Share of Children of Pre-primary School Age Who are not Enrolled in Pre-primary or Primary Education in 2013, by Country[15]

In 2012, an estimated 7.2 million children in MENA were out of school. Dropping out of school is often associated with poverty, disasters, armed conflicts, the absence of basic facilities, and poor Education quality (UNESCO, 2011: 23, 40). The studies of the national OOSCI from Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia raise a concern about the fact that the school environment and the teachers' behaviours, as well as their methods of punishment, have a significant effect on dropping out of school, especially for working children (UNICEF, 2014b: 61). The Jordan national of Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) study indicated that "the bad behaviour of teachers,

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[15] UNICEF (2014b), *Regional Report: on out-of-school Children*, All in School, Middle East and North Africa, Out-of-School Children Initiative, UNICEF MENA Regional Office, p. 28.

teaching methods and the use of severe punishment" are among the most central factors which

make working children leave school (UNICEF, 2014b: 61).
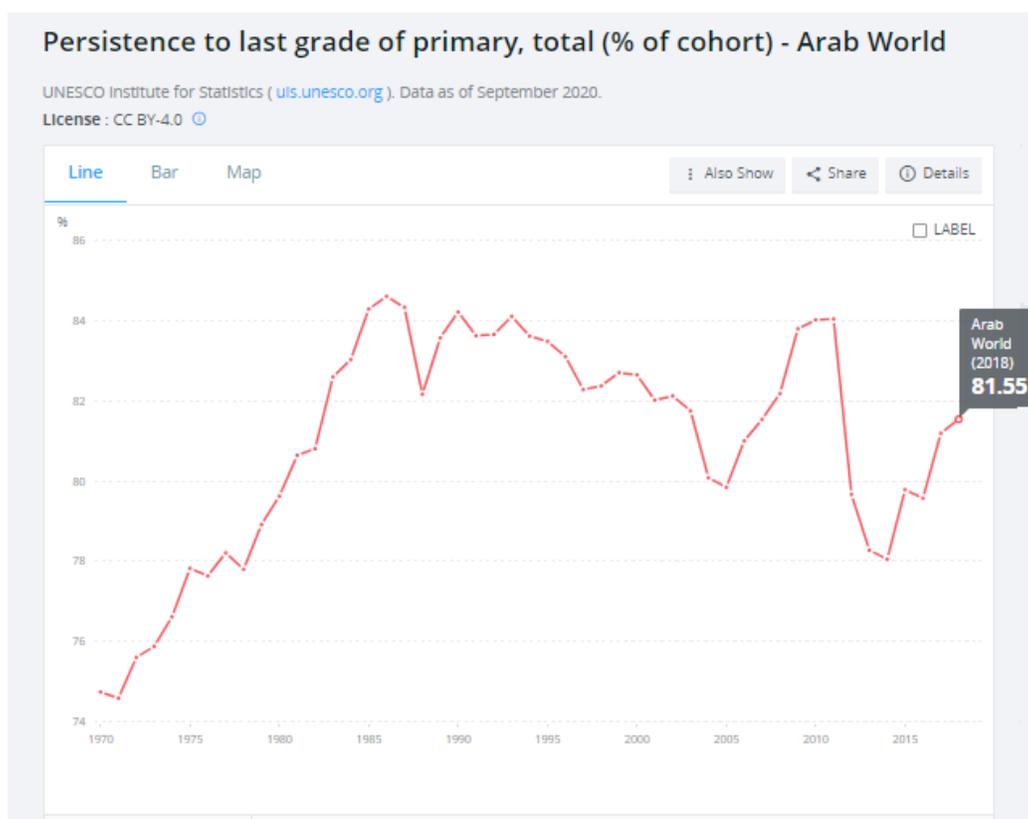
Figure 15 Persistence to Last Grade of Primary, Arab World [16]

UNICEF and UNESCO conducted a study on education in Palestine schools. The study focused

on the fact that violence in schools is a significant reason pushing students to leave school. One of

the students expressed himself and explained, "The reason for skipping classes lies in the school

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[16] UNESCO (2020), "Institute for Statistics, Annual Education Survey", The World Bank,
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.PRSL.ZS?end=2018&locations=1A&start=1970&view=ch
art, 22 May 2022.

environment itself. The teachers beat us, they shout at us, we do not have a chance to express ourselves, we are not listened to" (UNICEF, 2014b: 65). By way of illustration, in some countries, such as Iraq, corporal punishment is "explicitly authorized," while in other countries namely Qatar and Saudi Arabia in laws, corporal punishment is not prohibited; however, "Ministerial decrees advise against it" (UNICEF, 2014b: 65). Misbehaviour and academic weakness, including not doing homework, arriving late, or talking during class, are among the reasons for physical violence (Save the Children, 2011: 27). The previous study mentioned that the punishment is different between boys and girls. While boys suffer from physical violence, girls are mostly subject to "psychological and verbal abuse and marginalization" (UNICEF, 2014b: 65). Teachers explained that children would have better performance and discipline when they fear teachers, and corporal punishment is a pedagogical tool to achieve that. Nonetheless, teachers revealed their remorse, regretted using violence with students, and declared their willingness to find other tools to complete the order if they were given more support and chances to team up with parents (Save the Children, 2011: 28).

The relevance of the school depends on what is needed. It may vary depending on culture, gender, region, and rural to urban areas. Lack of relevance and satisfaction with schooling results are critical elements of disrupted education and thus dropping out of school. A citation of one of the students in a study conducted in East Jerusalem calls attention to many issues.

> I used to be a relatively good student, but my performance worsened. When I started receiving low grades, for fear of being humiliated, I started skipping classes. This only made my grades worse … the main reason for my leaving school was poor academic performance ... Most teachers were not interested in really making us improve. They would explain, and if we did not understand, they would ignore us (UNICEF, 2014b: 62).

Having an education equips students with the skills they need and provides the teaching team with the necessary tools to build a safe, peaceful atmosphere at school is a powerful strategy to get students to continue schooling and decrease the dropout rate.

3.3.2   Poverty and Child Labour:

Poverty is a crucial obstacle to achieving education for all. Nonetheless, this obstacle can efficiently be managed with a flexible, quality education system. This section describes the negative effects and results of poverty and child labour on education and school enrolments in attention to an image of the difficulties the students face in day-to-day life. These difficulties need a special kind of education system. A system can adapt to the new situations, students' needs, and time, especially in rural areas and conflict zones. Education can equip both students and teaching staff with what is needed. Once students realize the benefits of schooling for building a better future, they will order their priorities.

The effects of poverty on education are devastating by decreasing the chances and the quality of education. Moreover, families cannot afford the cost of sending children to school. Even if they do not have to pay the fees for public schools, they have to provide the required uniforms, books, materials, and transportation (UNESCO, 2011: 12). Between the overcrowded classrooms in some countries where the public school system is underfunded, and the high cost of private tuition, the demand for education is reducing (UNICEF, 2014b: 67). With poverty come unemployment, child labour (figure 16), violence, gender gaps, underfinanced public school, conflicts, and threats to communities' stability and safety. The effects of poverty can be observed more in rural and geographically remote areas and among marginalized minorities. In Yemen, Sudan, and Mauritania, there was a 10% percent increase in the number of people living below the poverty line, aggravating the situation (UNESCO, 2011: 13).

OF THE 152 MILLION CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR

AGE PROFILE

48% 5-11 years-olds

28% 12-14 years-olds

24% 15-17 years-olds

GENDER

58% 88 million

42% 64 million

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

70.9% Agriculture

11.9% Industry

17.2% Services
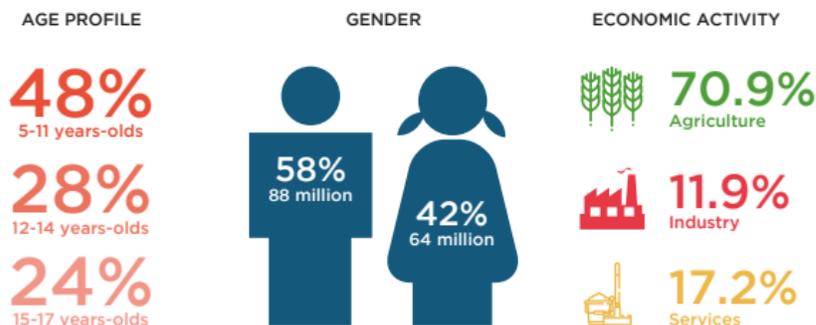
Figure 16 Of The 152 Million Children In Child Labour - 2016 children aged 5-17 years[17]

The numbers indicated in the figure below of child labour and school attendance chart and the rest from The International Labour Organization ILO report of 2017, demonstrate the horrific reality of the high number of children who are in the labouring child and entirely deprived of education not only in the Arab countries but all over the world (see figure 17 and figure 21). Nearly half of these child workers are in Africa (72.1 million); 41 per cent (62.1 million) are in Asia and the Pacific, and 1.2 million are in the Arab States. Needless to highlight a strong connection between child labour and living in countries suffering from conflict and crisis. Child labour in countries in war and armed conflict is "77 per cent higher than the global average" (International Labour Organization, 2017: 10).

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[17] International Labour Organization (2017), *Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012-2016*, Geneva, Switzerland, ILO, p. 5.

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Child labour and school attendance

(a) Number of children in child labour, 5-14 years age range, by school attendance status, 2016

(b) Percentage distribution of children in child labour, 5-14 years age range, by school attendance status, 2016

● Children in child labour and attending school   ● Children in child labour and not attending school
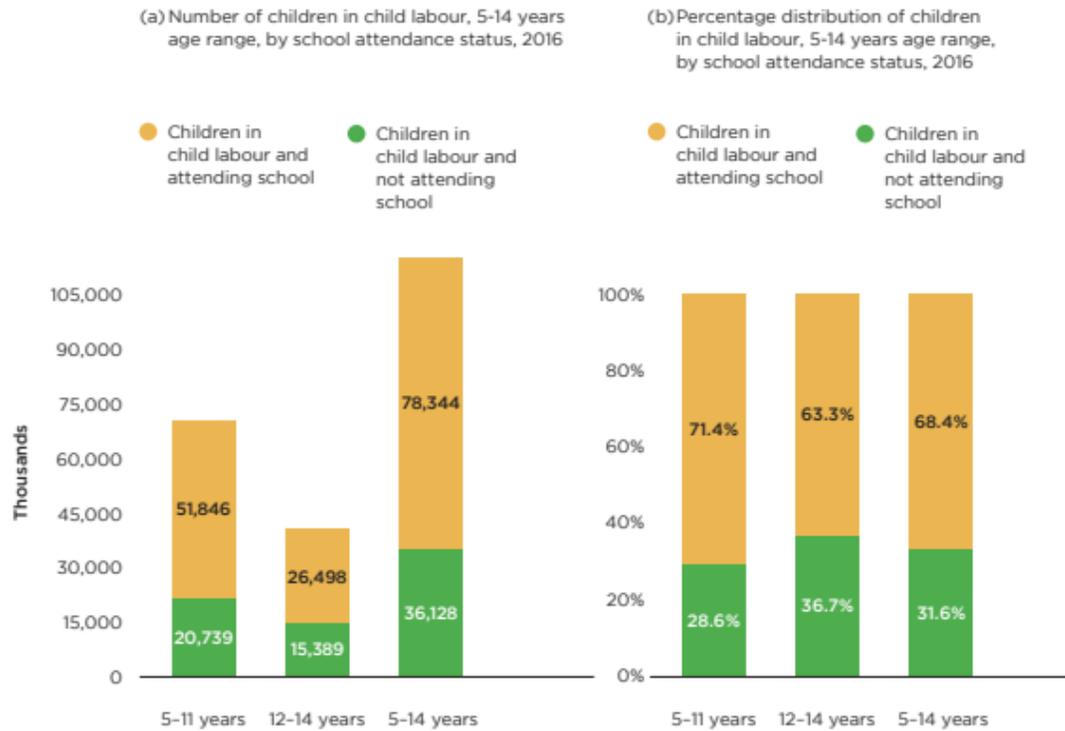
Figure 17 Child Labour and School Attendance[18]

The International Labour Organization (ILO) describes child labor as:

> Work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.
>
> (Compassion International, Inc., 2022: 1).

According to the fifth edition of the International Labour Organization quadrennial report series

on global estimates of child labour, in 2016, 152 million children were in child labour worldwide.

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[18] International Labour Organization (2017), *Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012-2016*, Geneva, Switzerland, ILO, p. 47.

Almost half of those in child labour, "73 million children in absolute terms – are in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety, and moral development" (International Labour Organization, 2017: 11). As indicated in the below chart and the dynamic figure of Regional prevalence of Child Labour (figure 18 in dark blue and light green), a large percentage of these numbers can be found in North Africa and the Middle East (MENA), which declares how far we still have to go to achieve the 2025 target to end all forms of child labour.
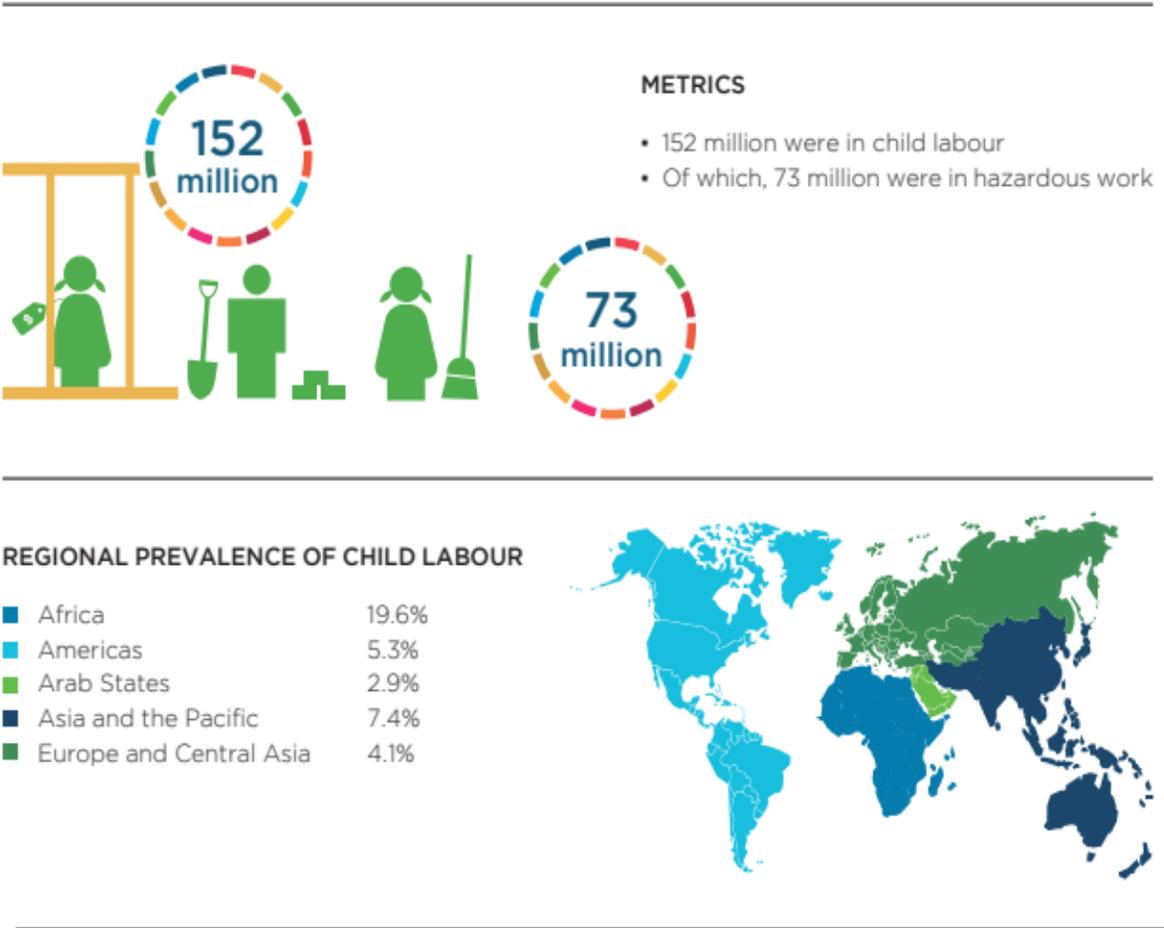
Figure 18 Regional Revalence of Child Labour - children aged 5-17 years [19]

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[19] International Labour Organization (2017), *Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012-2016*, Geneva, Switzerland, ILO, p. 5.

The enrolment and dropout levels differ enormously in comparing rich Arab countries, namely the Gulf region. There is less student density than in other countries like Egypt, where there is high population growth and poverty level, or Yemen and Somalia, countries of low individual income (El Laithy, 2016: 23). The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected the labour market, where it is expected the loss of 1.7 million jobs due to the pandemic. The economic sectors have significantly been damaged by the pandemic in the Arab region, especially the manufacturing and industrial service (UNESCWA, 2020b: 5).
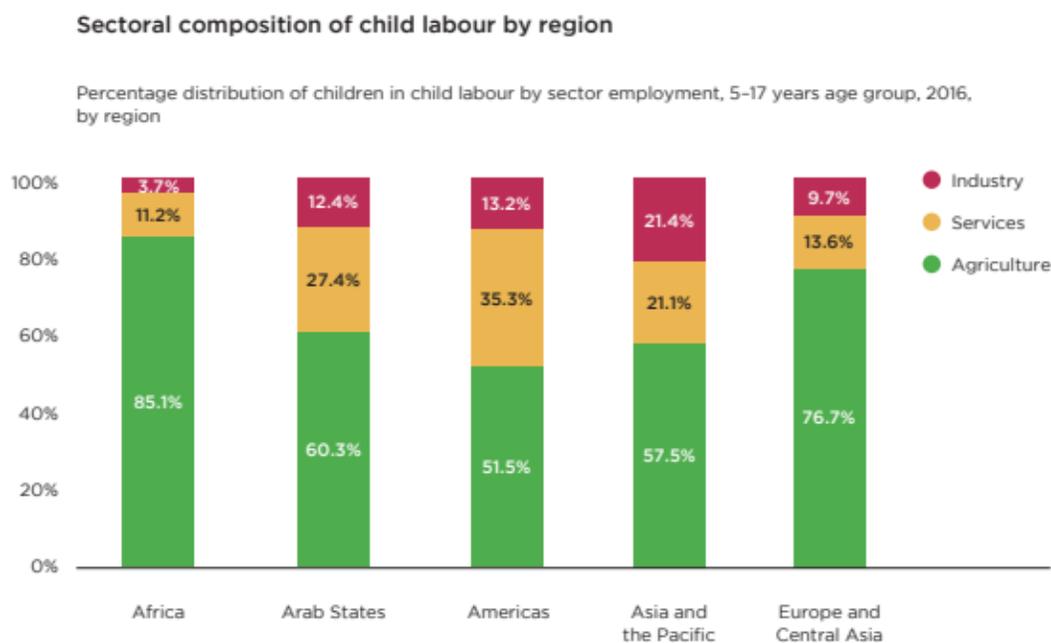
Figure 19 Sectoral Composition of Child Labour by Region[20]

Despite the significant differences among some countries regarding providing basic school needs and infrastructure, the phenomena of leaving school are still there. However, a quality

[6] International Labour Organization (2017), *Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012-2016*, Geneva, Switzerland, ILO, p. 36.

education that meets the students' needs can prevent that. A significant number of children continue schooling and working parallel. It is reported that around two-thirds of children in child labour in both Djibouti and Yemen attend school. This proves the importance of a flexible education system and "education quality and in particular the ability of schools to accommodate the individual needs" (UNICEF, 2014b: 60). When students recognize that their needs are met, and the educational system is considering their difficult situations and providing them with possible solutions, they will be motivated to continue their educations, especially when they are offered a quality education that improves their life and gives them the hope and the power to build a better tomorrow.

Global estimates results at a glance

			Children in employment		Of which: Children in child labour		Of which: Children in hazardous work	
			2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016
World (5–17 years)		Number (000s)	264 427	218 019	167 956	151 622	85 344	72 525
		Prevalence (%)	16.7	13.8	10.6	9.6	5.4	4.6
Age range	5–14 years	Number (000s)	144 066	130 364	120 453	114 472	37 841	35 376
		Prevalence (%)	11.8	10.6	9.9	9.3	3.1	2.9
	15–17 years	Number (000s)	120 362	87 655	47 503	37 149	47 503	37 149
		Prevalence (%)	33.0	24.9	13.0	10.5	13.0	10.5
Sex (5–17 years)	Male	Number (000s)	148 327	123 190	99 766	87 521	55 048	44 774
		Prevalence (%)	18.1	15.0	12.2	10.7	6.7	5.5
	Female	Number (000s)	116 100	94 829	68 190	64 100	30 296	27 751
		Prevalence (%)	15.2	12.4	8.9	8.4	4.0	3.6
Region (5–17 years)	Africa	Number (000s)	--	99 417	--	72 113	--	31 538
		Prevalence (%)	--	27.1	--	19.6	--	8.6
	Americas	Number (000s)	--	17 725	--	10 735	--	6 553
		Prevalence (%)	--	8.8	--	5.3	--	3.2
	Asia and the Pacific	Number (000s)	129 358	90 236	77 723	62 077	33 860	28 469
		Prevalence (%)	15.5	10.7	9.3	7.4	4.1	3.4
	Europe and Central Asia	Number (000s)	--	8 773	--	5 534	--	5 349
		Prevalence (%)	--	6.5	--	4.1	--	4.0
	Arab States	Number (000s)	--	1 868	--	1 162	--	616
		Prevalence (%)	--	4.6	--	2.9	--	1.5

Figure 20 Global Estimates Results at a Glance[21]

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[21] International Labour Organization (2017), *Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012-2016*, Geneva, Switzerland, ILO, p. 9.

3.3.3 Conflict:

Due to the crisis in the region during the last decade, children's education has been interrupted. Many students have missed out or become out of formal education for some time. "Low socio-economic conditions of families - Lack of residency permits - Lack of documentation, and no recognition of prior learning - Difference in language of instruction and curriculum - Safety and protection concerns" (UNESCO, 2017: 10) are the barriers to education during the conflict. The risk of dropping out of the education system for children who had their education interrupted, increases with challenges in accessing education and keeping up with formal schooling (UNESCO, 2017: 17).

The rates of primary school's last year in each of Yemen, Iraq, Mauritania, and Morocco are respectively 59%, 67%, 82%, and 78% (UNESCO, 2011: 22). "16 million children in the region are out of school, including 10 percent of them are primary school-aged children" (UNESCWA, 2020: 60). Twenty-two million children in the region are out of school or at risk of dropping out. And 13 million are out of school because of conflicts in the region. In addition, up to 45% of youth in some countries are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) (UNESCO and Arab Regional Support Group, 2018: 2). By 2018 in Mosul, Iraq, 74,000 out of 141,000 children are out of the education system without access. 2.3 million children in Yemen are out of school, and 300,000 children and youth require educational support in Libya. Around 558 schools in Libya and 1600 schools in Yemen were damaged or destroyed or become shelters for displaced persons or bases for military use. In Palestine, 500,000 children and youth need education support. In addition to vulnerable groups at risk of dropping out of school, displaced by crises, and moved to host communities (UNESCO, 2017: 11; UNESCWA, 2020: 10).

In Syria, 173 million school-age children are out-of-school, and one-third of the staff of the education system no longer working in the sector. One in every three schools was damaged, destroyed, or become a shelter for displaced persons or a place for military use. Syrian refugee children in host countries (Egypt, Iraq. Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey) face obstacles to joining the school system; in 2017, around 731 thousand school-age children were not in school. Millions of people in the Arab regions have been forced to leave their homes due to conflicts, with approximately 10 million internally displaced persons in Sudan, Iraq, Somalia, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen (El Laithy, 2016: 1). Refugee camps and internally displaced person settlements struggle with poor living conditions such as high density.

According to European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), 89.3 million people were displaced worldwide at the end of 2021. These numbers declare that over two-thirds of them are from only five countries, two of which are Syria and South Sudan (ECHO, 2022: 1). During the last decade, many Arab countries have suffered from troubles and conflicts ranging from embargoes in Libya and Iraq to wars in Palestine and Syria. Primary education has been disrupted due to instability at the social and political level that has accompanied the rise of the Arab Spring.

Strategy 5 of the Dakar Framework for Action has become especially relevant to the Arab region: "Meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities, and instability, and conduct educational programs in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict" (Barry, 2000: 9). Conventional education system objectives cannot be achieved under new conditions. Therefore, education should be modified as a positive instrument in creating a peaceful environment and communities by spreading peace strategies (Barry, 2000: 49). In a time of conflict where the education system

is struggling and under-resourced, it is challenging to meet the need of the learners who need to be equipped with the adequate skills to deal with the current situation's difficulties. If the education program does not provide the learners with the learning experience and the skills they are looking for, the risk of dropping out of school will increase (UNESCO, 2017: 11).

3.3.3.1 Stateless People in Some Arab Countries (the Bidoon):

Stateless (the Bidoon) is one of the results of the conflict. It creates obstacles to getting access to the education system. Lack of documentation in refugees' camps or host communities causes stateless problems. Stateless populations or those whose nationality is not recognized and not able to get an ID or enjoy the right to free movement or education and work opportunities face many restrictions to government institutions such as schools and sometimes even no access at all. These restrictions affect stateless children who desire to continue their schooling and lead to difficulties enjoying access to education. The statistics of UNHCR for 2015 reported that there are 374,237 recorded stateless persons in the region. However, these figures do not reflect the actual numbers of the stateless population, which most likely are significantly higher (Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, 2017: 95).

3.3.4   Discrimination Against Girls:

Unfortunately, many parents do not recognize the importance of girls' education and the rewarded benefits of empowering women for themselves and society. The skills and the future benefits of the school curriculum are not considered. Girls' education "strengthens economies and reduces inequality. It contributes to more stable, resilient societies that give all individuals – including boys and men – the opportunity to fulfill their potential" (UNICEF, 2022: 2).

Mainly the out-of-school children throughout the region are girls. Although significant progress has been achieved concerning gender inequality in school enrolment, most of the world's out-of-school children are still girls. Early marriage and high fertility rates up to the present time can be found among poor households, which cause difficulties in achieving gender parity in Education (El Laithy, 2016: 1). In many countries, girls' enrolment and completion rates were steadily lower than boys in primary education. Girls are particularly disadvantaged regarding their educational opportunities when living in marginalized populations, rural areas, poor neighborhoods, or refugee communities, and in situations of violent conflict. This problem of discrimination against girls and women in education is crucially affecting the achievement of education for all in the Arab States (UNESCO, 2011: 13). The number of girls who attended primary school in the region between 2011 and 2016 increased more than ever (El Laithy, 2016: 1). The gender disadvantage was most seen in Northern Africa and western Asia, where over two-thirds of children out of school are girls. In sub-Saharan Africa, girls formed 56 percent of children out of school (United Nations, 2015: 65).

In the 2017 International Labor Office report, the number of boys appears higher than the girls' and that may be because girls are "more present in less visible and therefore under-reported forms of child labour such as domestic service in private households", It is way more probably that girls more than boys "shoulder responsibility for household chores, a form of work not considered in child labor estimates", and if not in private houses, in their own homes (International Labour Office, 2017: 14, 42). Child marriage is another factor with harmful effects on girls' school enrolment. When "puberty occurs", young age marriage is common. If a girl is a primary school student, culture is in favour of boys' schooling. "If all girls in the MENA region progressed on age," grade differences would collapse among boys and girls respecting enrolments" (UNICEF,

2014b: 19). According to the United Nations Populations Funds, nearly 40 million child brides in the Middle East and North Africa; around 1 in 5 young women are married before their 18th birthday and 1 in 24 before their 15th birthday (UNFPA, 2022: 1). Over the last 25 years, child marriage has become "less common," and the numbers have dropped from 1 in 3 to 1 in 5 young women, but sadly in the past decade, that progress seems to have stopped (UNICEF, 2019: 3). UNICEF's global databases of 2019 collected data on young girls who were married or in union before their 18th birthday in some Arab States, among which are 13% in Morocco, 28% in Iraq, 17% of women aged 20 to 24 years in Egypt, 8% in Jordan, 6% in Lebanon, 3% in Algeria, 4% in Qatar, in Sudan 12% by 15 years old and 34% by 18 years old and 2% in Tunisia (UNICEF Global Databases, 2021) (Figure 21).

A number of countries in the region have made great strides in reducing child marriage in the past generation

FIG. 2 Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, in countries with the most progress in the past 25 years
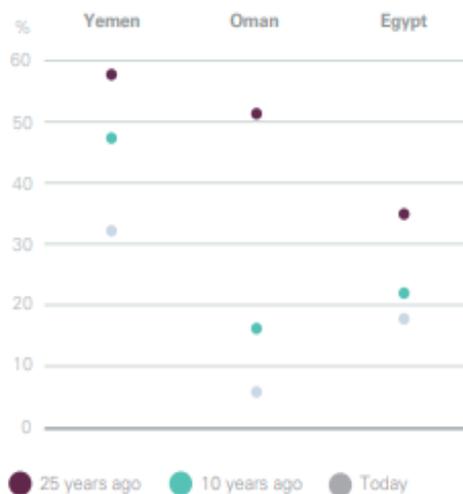
Some countries that began with relatively low prevalence of child marriage have continued to bring levels down, to below 10 per cent

FIG. 3 Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, in countries with low prevalence of child marriage and continued progress
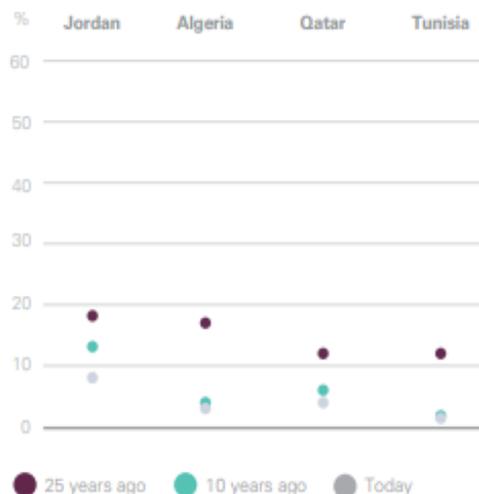
Figure 21 Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18[22]

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[22] UNICEF (2019), *A Profile of Child Marriage: In the Middle East and North Africa*, UNICEF, P. 3.

The crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has not improved the situation. Studying remotely has been the method for many schools and students during the pandemic. However, using computers and having internet access is also gendered in many Arab regions. The high cost of a computer might hinder some women from obtaining one. Moreover, women might have limited access to the household computer due to the norms prioritizing the male's access over the female's. "Nearly half of the female population of 84 million is not connected to the Internet nor has access to a mobile phone" according to ESCWA statistics, "in Iraq, 98.3 percent of men have internet access compared with 51.2 percent of women (UNESCWA, 2020b: 3). Establishing distance learning programmes is one of the solutions. These programs should be "accessible" to women and girls, specifically "in hard-to-reach populations". These distance learning programmes should include "the use of national television, and ensure access to different modes for transferring knowledge and information" (UNESCWA, 2020b: 6).

Education for girls is more than having access to the education system and going to school. "It's also about girls feeling safe in classrooms and supported in the subjects and careers they choose to pursue – including those in which they are often under-represented" (UNICEF, 2022: 2). School educational system should provide an environment that empowers and equips girls with the required life skills and the opportunity "to complete all levels of education, acquiring the knowledge and skills to compete in the labor market; gain socio-emotional and life skills necessary to navigate and adapt to a changing world; make decisions about their own lives; and contribute to their communities and the world." (The World Bank, 2020). Girls will put effort to continue attending this schooling system.

Once an education system and curriculum support demonstrate that girls' education benefits both girls and boys, the attitudes towards girls' education will be changed. "An education free of negative gender norms has direct benefits for boys, too" (UNICEF, 2022: 5). Girls' education empowers girls to support their families at different levels. This decreases the pressure on boys as breed winners in many societies where the "norms around masculinity can fuel disengagement from school, child labour, gang violence and recruitment into armed groups. The need or desire to earn an income also causes boys to drop out of secondary school, as many of them believe the curriculum is not relevant to work opportunities" (UNICEF, 2022: 5). A curriculum focuses on the professional development of gender-responsive pedagogies and teacher training, supports girls' education, and narrow the gap between gender. Furthermore, a curriculum eliminates gender stereotypes from learning materials and any related indications, which is critical. Moreover, the education system should support distance-related educational barriers and work on re-entry policies for young mothers and menstrual hygiene management in schools (UNICEF, 2022: 6).

3.3.5 Unqualified Teachers:

Most unqualified teachers lack the proper and necessary competence to deliver quality teaching. It is an enormous problem that faces education in the Arab States (Figure 22). This significantly affects the students' academic performance and leads to adverse outcomes such as drop-out of school. Unfortunately, the Dakar Framework for Action data shows a big difference in the number of teachers who meet the minimum required national qualifications. The difference ranged between 21 percent and 100 percent in the late 1990s. Furthermore, the entry qualifications for teachers have a surprisingly significant disparity: it varies from having a secondary school

degree to four or five years of higher education. The same variance can be seen in pedagogical requirements as it differs from nil to a complete program approaching international standards. To have a license for teaching and be professionalized in this field is still not a common standard in the Arab World. The report suggested that to attract young and qualified teachers, more effort should be made to help them overcome the many obstacles they face in their jobs, including improving working conditions and social standing (Barry, 2000: 47).

Figure 22 Trained Teachers in Primary Education- Arab World[23]

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[23] UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2022), *Trained Teachers in Primary Education (% of total teachers)- Arab World*, The World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.TCAQ.ZS?end=2018&locations=1A&start=1970&view=chart, 22 May 2022,

Sadly, teachers are "among the lowest-paid employees in the public sector, are often unmotivated due to their low salaries and social status as well as their poor working conditions" (Hartman, 2008: 80). It may or may not lead to a bad performance in delivering the school course materials. Students need better accomplishments in exams. However, the low-quality teachers' performance puts parents under pressure to seek private educators/teachers or private classes. Yet, at the same time, private classes are an additional income many teachers greatly depend on to meet the end. This problem has become a real issue in many Arab States, including Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia (UNICEF, 2014b: 59, 67).

Many factors push qualified teachers away from teaching, including "the lack of a comprehensive and integrated policy framework for teacher preparation, utilization, and career development, in conjunction with an underdeveloped professionalized teacher-training module and lack of a continuous professional development framework" (UNESCO, 2016: 15). Policies relating to teachers' development and teaching methods should be a top priority in the Arab world, and policymakers should work upon them. Supporting and attracting the best students to become future teachers is an effective way to achieve our goal. This is along with assuring their continuous professional development with up-to-date training and good working conditions. On the ground of this, it is essential to have an effective dialogue and constant cooperation among teachers, researchers, and policymakers (UNESCO, 2015: 59).

Effective teachers are vital key elements for students to receive a better education. Good teaching is a powerful tool in an effective learning process. A trained and qualified teacher with good knowledge and skills is among the most fundamental learning elements. Training teachers means providing educators with the necessary pedagogical skills to utilize teaching tools effectively. Training teachers is an investment in the country's development (UNICEF, 2015).

"The right to education means the right to a qualified teacher… Without trained and qualified teachers…the right to education cannot be fulfilled" (AfriKids, 2018). The lack of qualified, trained teachers prevents students from the opportunities to enhance their life-long skills and value education. Trained teachers encourage students to keep coming to school "despite some of them having to walk miles to attend every day" to enjoy the experience of learning (AfriKids, 2018).

3.3.6 Low-Quality Education System and Curriculum: Outdated Education Systems and No Engaging Society**:**

Textbook and curriculum quality is another crucial element in the education process. However, in general, the curriculum in the Arab world does not support an education system that lines up with contemporary realities and the requirements and the needs of the labour market. The Arab Bureau for Education in the Gulf States made an effort to improve and modernize textbooks to include essential skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving. However, many issues need to be focused on and enhanced, such as gender and equality. (UNESCO- Regional Bureau Beirut, 2008: 54).

The Mono-grade system is another obstacle to shed light on. According to UNICEF, curricula in primary school, in general, are Mono-grade and not multi-graded (UNICEF, 2014b: 19). The Mono-grade system is widely recognized and followed by educational institutions (Linehan, 2012: 10). In Mono-grade classrooms, students who are in a grade study the same curriculum not taking into consideration their age, their cognitive development level, or natural variation in ability (UNICEF, 2014b: 19), which is not a sustained process for many students such as rural students and in many cases students from poor regions (Linehan, 2012: 10). The percentage of dropping out increases with overage students repeating grades alongside younger peers, which

might affect their motivation and social development (UNICEF, 2014b: 19). Multigrade class is an alternative methodology to consider declining student enrollment because of the "required individualized teaching through differentiated instruction" (Linehan, 2012: 10).
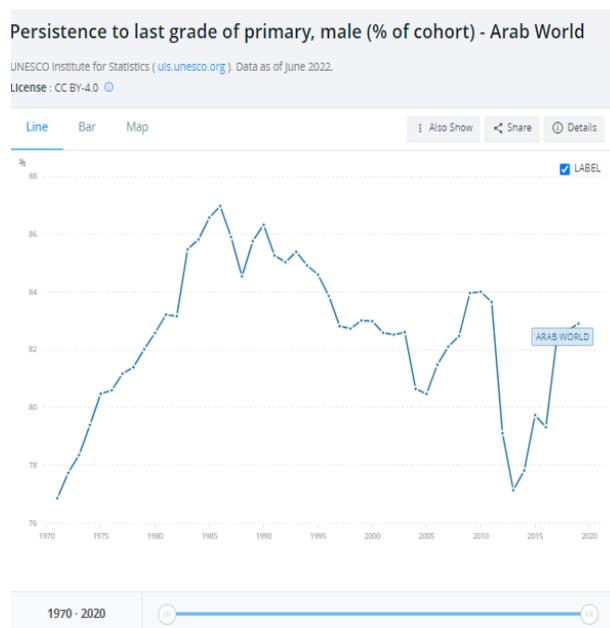
Figure 23 Persistence to last grade of primary,
Male- Arab World[24]
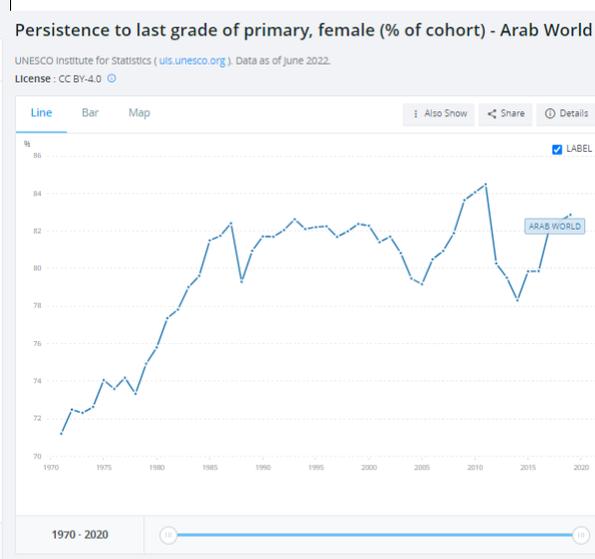
Figure 24 Persistence to Last Grade of Primary,
Female- Arab World[25]

Regional trends at the primary level in the Arab States have revolved around access and quality issues (UNESCO, 2011: 21). Achieving quality in education requires many components that, unfortunately, are unavailable in several Arab countries. During the ten years between the

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[24] UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2022), *Persistence to Last Grade of Primary, Male (% of cohort) - Arab World,* The World Bank Group,
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.PRSL.MA.ZS?end=2020&locations=1A&start=1970&view=chart, 6 June 2022.
[25] UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2022), *Persistence to Last Grade of Primary, Female (% of cohort) - ArabWorld,* The World Bank Group,
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.PRSL.FE.ZS?end=2020&locations=1A&start=1970&view=chart, 6June 2022.

Jomtien Declaration (World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs) in Thailand in 1990 and the six goals of the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000, there were some remarkable achievements in many Arab States, including the enforcement of a basic structure of public education. However, there are still no clear standards to ensure quality within the national education provision (UNESCO, 2011: 40). One of the reasons why the quality of education has remained a challenge is because the focus so far has been on improving school enrolment and access rather than on quality (Barry, 2000: 49). The ten articles of the Jomtien Declaration could be used as a foundation to improve the quality of education in the Arab world:

> (1) meeting basic learning needs; (2) shaping the vision; (3) universalizing access and promoting equity; (4) focusing on learning acquisition; (5) broadening the means and scope of basic education; (6) enhancing the environment for learning; (7) strengthening partnerships; (8) developing a supporting policy context; (9) mobilizing resources; and (10) strengthening international solidarity.
>
> <div align="right">(Barry, 2000: 49).</div>

The education systems in many Arab Countries are outdated and ill-equipped. According to the curriculum analysis made by UNESCO, the curricula do not have the modern world development requirements. For example, the curriculum in some countries like Iraq and Lebanon do not deal with the environment, population and current issues, while in other countries, like Yemen, it focuses on theoretical knowledge at the expense of practical and analytical or critical skills. In addition, materials related to the internet, computer and other technology are hardly found as a component of public education in the Arab region. Furthermore, the teaching and learning materials approach is narrow and traditional, making the learning process hard, dry, and lacking in creativity or individuality (UNESCO, 2011: 40).

It is crucial that the curriculum focuses on educating students about the geography, history, culture, and politics of other countries worldwide besides the Arab world. "It aims to have students think critically and be open-minded when encountering another culture" (Pafumi, 2009: 1).

Teaching students about other cultures is increasingly becoming a crucial necessity due to the phenomena of globalism and technology. They need to be taught and prepared to evaluate the vast information coming from every corner of the world that becomes intertwined and interconnected due to the technological revolution in a logical, critical, and open-minded way.

The education system in the Arab States need "to serve the needs of pluralistic societies and foster the development of active, responsible citizens who are empowered to deal with complexity and advance constructive change" (Muasher and Brown, 2018: 55). The educational system now concentrates on "quantitative" indices rather than "quality"; subsequently, it certainly cannot achieve the goal. The report of the Arab Human Development in 2016 revealed the fact that the Arab education system is "Overall, the quality of education is poor" (United Nations Development Program, 2016: 31). According to UNESCO, Arab States achieved some good successes in building schools (UNESCO- Regional Bureau Beirut, 2008), which are expanded in most of the States to villages, rural areas, and refugee camps and raised the youth literacy rates above 90 percent in most Arab States and largely closing the gender gap in basic literacy and beyond. According to the World Bank data in 2021, women in most Arab States exceed men in going after university degrees (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021).

Nonetheless, the educational system is designed to employ specific academic material. Accordingly, lower-level cognitive skills are communicated, passed on, and imparted "(recall and comprehension) at the expense of higher-level ones (application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and critical thinking)" (Muasher and Brown, 2018: 57). As a result, a generation of graduates with certificates and degrees but not with the necessary set of skills to face and deal with the economic and social challenges the Arab societies are going through. These methodologies can confuse and create mixed messages without the right tools to examine and review the information to

differentiate between the past and up-to-date sources and work out their way in societies. Furthermore, major social topics, such as gender discrimination and inequalities, tend to be avoided as they consider sensitive issues for schools (Muasher and Brown, 2018: 59).

Many international reports, as explained in the previous points, connected the shortcoming of the Arab school system to the lack of preparation, underprepared staff, or unemployment due to many economic challenges. However, this is not the only reason for this problem. In addition to schools, societies contribute heavily to education. It is not solely the educational institute and the economic development that affect the education process but "political stability and social peace". Reforming the educational system should focus on changing or adjusting a current school curriculum to meet the daily challenges, on a holistic approach to move society and develop visions at needed levels, starting with students, teachers, parents, and communities and ending with political leadership and public office. This learning method integrates what is taught inside the classroom to put into action outside the classroom, in their home, play yard, in family, and long after school. Building a productive generation of productive citizens can be through focusing on a broader and society-wide vision (Muasher and Brown, 2018: 55-56).

3.3.7 The COVID-19 Pandemic and Education:

The COVID-19 pandemic was a challenge for the ongoing education system. As mentioned in the previous sections, the pandemic has exposed the gaps in the materials and the current educational system. Intervening education workplace has severe, alarming, long-term consequences on economies and societies, causing different kinds of problems such as "increased inequality, poorer health outcomes, and reduced social cohesion" (UNESCO, 2020b: 1). This crisis

will most probably have a significant impact on the educational system for many years to come. It was an opportunity to review the curriculum, teaching system, and learning process and development, focusing on improving students' learning skills. The curriculum generally involves syllabuses, frameworks, and studies associated with teaching tools and resources from textbooks to illustrative tools. With millions of students learning from home, schools and families needed to find a framework to communicate and cooperate in the best possible way in students' interests. Consequently, both teachers and parents become more involved in "decisions regarding curriculum appropriateness". This method of collaboration can "support the development of a learner-centered, participative and inclusive learning paradigm that takes into account the interests of learners, as well as their environments and aspirations" (UNESCO, 2020b: 1-2).

The COVID-19 pandemic has blocked students' education in the Arab world. A survey was conducted by Arab Barometer- which is a central resource for quantitative research on the Middle East- between July 2020 and April 2021 in seven Arab countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco), indicated that half of the population in these countries are not satisfied with the education system during the pandemic (figure 25). Additionally, more than 75% (92 percent in Jordan, 87 percent in Jordan in Lebanon) of COVID-19 impacted severely to moderate children's education. For more than 25 percent, education was one of the biggest challenges they faced during COVID-19. Moreover, 2 out of 10 explained that they wish to travel to other countries looking for better education opportunities for themselves or their families (Arab Barometer, 2022: 1-3) (figure 26 and figure 27).

Satisfaction with the education system
% saying completely satisfied or satisfied

Algeria — Lebanon — Morocco
Jordan — Libya — Tunisia
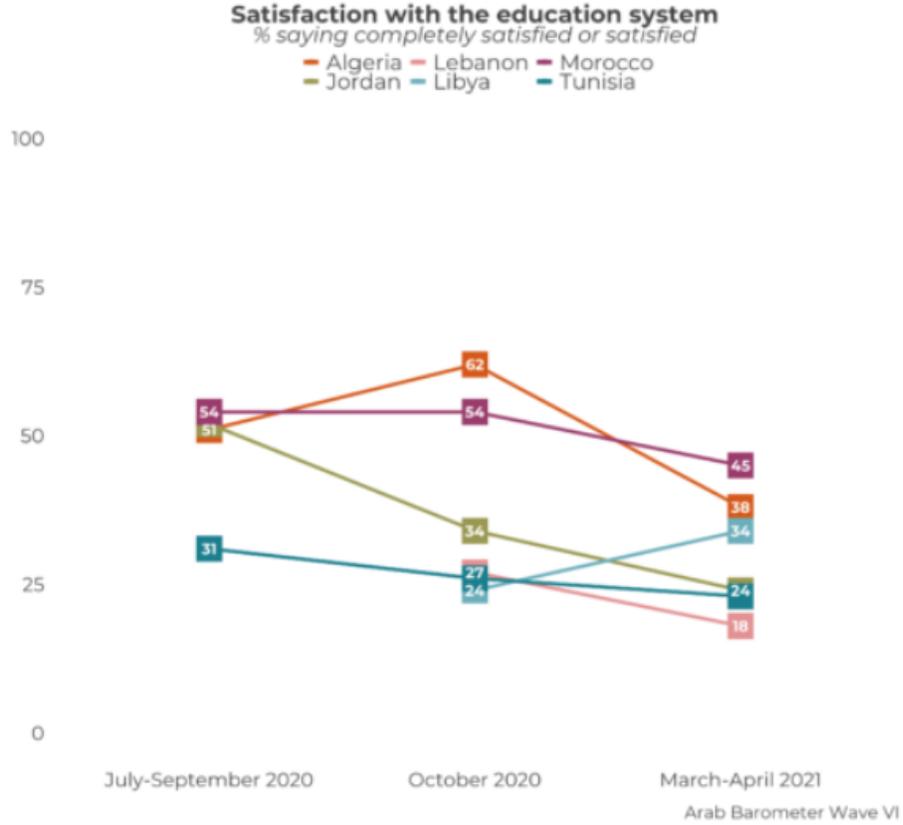
Figure 25 Satisfaction with the Education System 2020-2021[26]

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[26] Arab Barometer (2022), "What Arabs think about Education During The COVID-19 Pandemic", Arab Barometer, p.2, https://www.arabbarometer.org/2022/01/what-arabs-think-about-education-during-the-covid-pandemic/, 6 April 2022.

Biggest challenge caused by COVID-19
% saying disruption of my kids' education

Country	Value
Libya	36
Jordan	30
Iraq	25
Algeria	25
Morocco	24
Tunisia	23
Lebanon	9

Arab Barometer Wave VI Part III (March - April 2021)

Impact of COVID-19 on children's education
% saying extremely or moderately negative

Country	Value
Jordan	92
Lebanon	87
Algeria	84
Morocco	76
Tunisia	74

Arab Barometer Wave VI Part I (July-October 2020)

Figure 26 Biggest Challenge Caused by COVID-19[27]

Figure 27 Impact of COVID-19 on Children's Education[28]

[27] Arab Barometer (2022), "What Arabs think about Education During The COVID-19 Pandemic", Arab Barometer, p.2, https://www.arabbarometer.org/2022/01/what-arabs-think-about-education-during-the-covid-pandemic/, 6 April 2022.

[28] Arab Barometer (2022), "What Arabs think about Education During The COVID-19 Pandemic", Arab Barometer, p.2, https://www.arabbarometer.org/2022/01/what-arabs-think-about-education-during-the-covid-pandemic/, 6 April 2022.

Arab world is not ready for this kind of crisis and cannot meet the requirement of many of the questions raised during the pandemic:

> 1-How available and accessible is high-quality remote learning (for respective learning outcomes, age groups and for marginalized groups)?
>
> 2-How long can the current remote learning approach be sustained, including learning achievements, and social-emotional wellbeing, given domestic pressure on caregivers and other context-specific factors?
>
> 3- Do caregivers have the necessary tools to protect children from online harassment and online gender-based violence, while they are learning through online platforms?
>
> 4- How ready and able are teachers and educational authorities to adapt to different administrative and learning approaches? Are they able and ready to implement infection prevention and control measures?
>
> 5- Are there protection-related risks related to children not attending school, such as increased risk of domestic violence, child labour, or sexual exploitation against girls and boys?
>
> (UNESCO, 2020b: 2).

More than 110 million students from pre-primary to higher education in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) suffered from education disruption due to COVID-19 (UNESCO, 2021: 5). Access internet was not available to all children. According to a report by UNICEF in 2020, "2.2 billion children and young people aged 25 years or less – two-thirds of children and young people worldwide – do not have an internet connection at home". The report illustrated that 91 percent of students of low-income households or rural families do not have access to the Internet. For instance, in some countries of sub-Saharan Africa, "home internet access among the poorest 20 percent of households is either non-existent or almost non-existent, largely due to a lack of infrastructure in rural area" (UNICEF, 2020: 11). Kherieh Rassas, vice president of Palestine's An-Najah National University, highlighted in an interview a very crucial topic: "Despite the importance of technology in our lives, we have become its hostages… What if another virus of

another kind emerges and paralyzes technology? We must think seriously to answer this question" (Abd El-Galil, 2022: 3).

3.4 Conclusion:

This section provides a holistic view of the education system in the Arab States and the many obstacles facing it. It focuses as well on the importance of early childhood education. Early education affects children's behavioural development. It is the foundation of a healthy, developed society. At this age, the fundamental values that shape moral values and choice-making in the adults begin to crystallize. Therefore, it is crucial to integrate these values into an early education curriculum, especially at the primary level. The chapter discusses that despite the progress in developing the education system, it fails to reach the National Education Framework for Action goals. As this chapter demonstrates schooling system in the Arab region is poorly designed and structured to meet the students' needs. It is important to consider that there is a difference among the countries of the Arab world in terms of the quality of education.

Over the last decade, the Arab States have accomplished significant steps in improving the field of education. Still, the quality of education has not reached the expectations due to many reasons. Conflicts, crises, and their enormous effects on society are one of these causes. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the educational system as well. It highlighted the gaps in the curriculum, teaching system, and learning process. Education in the Arab States is in a critical period after more than ten years of crises in the area. The damage is massive. It leads to disruption of the school year, closure and destruction of many educational institutions, the uncertainty of attendance in functioning institutions, and the absence of teachers. The prevalence of conflicts has a strong effect on the education sector and children's lives. Children in the many

Arab States have witnessed profound violence and suffered from instability and lack of safety. Access to educational institutions and the availability of basic services has become a serious dilemma. Displacement, transportation, safety in hot zones, school structural safety, availability of teachers, water and electricity supply to schools, and psychological and emotional trauma are challenges children face on a daily basis (UNESCO, 2011: 12).

A component of quality education is to respond to individual circumstances and create emotional and behavioural support, especially in times of conflict and crisis. Arab States need quality education that addresses poverty, child labour, discrimination against girls, mental health issues, and physical disability. An education "addresses the interdependence of environment, economy, and society, and helps bring about the fundamental change of mindsets needed to trigger action for sustainable development" (UNESCO, 2015: 12). An education brings peaceful insight and can use the powerful effects of social media, the internet, and communication technologies and help children find the tools to face and deal with daily obstacles.

Most Arab countries are missing an educational system designed to teach Peace Education. They are missing a system includes a curriculum and a qualified teaching team that provides students with skills and tools to empower them personally and professionally and build a sustainable society. The educational systems in the Arab region have developed by mainly addressing the "technical" or "engineering" aspects (Faour and Muasher, 2011: 4). It concentrates on "quantitative" indices rather than "quality". "Teaching in most Arab states continues to be didactic, teacher-directed, and not conducive to fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving capacity" (Faour and Muasher, 2011: 5). There is no space for creativity, imagination, or individuality. Most programs are designed to give students fixed temples to think, act, react, and what to expect. Creativity in producing original ideas, new ways of thinking, and problem-solving

is not considered or given value. A well-trained, prepared teaching team is a crucial factor in delivering these tools. Generally, the issue in most Arab States is not related to the shortage of numbers of teachers but rather to the qualifications of teachers.

The objectives of education have been changed, and its future role should be re-directed. There are growing demands to improve the quality of teaching and its ability to develop students' skills to deal with the current situation. Arab States are aware of this need and putting efforts. However, developing education does not only mean following UNESCO's goals and other international goals but also meeting Arab society's needs. To build a culture of peace in a better future, it is necessary to dig down and identify the underlying problems and develop a strategy suitable for Arabic culture, society, communities, and individuals. Now is the best time to work hard to find ways to address the main needs while taking into consideration the Arab context. It is the time to re-shape the way of thinking and spread hope, love, optimism, and courage.

3.5 Focusing on Syria Education:

The facts in the above sections show that the Arab world needs to adapt its educational system to fulfill the needs of the children. It will be almost impossible to reach a culture of peace with all these obstacles. Several general factors stand in the way of delivering Education for Peace and preventing achieving a culture of peace. The situation of Education for Peace varies from one country to another in the Arab World. Education status in some Arab States has achieved a high level of progress and is fundamentally different from the other Arab States in the region. In addition to the general Arab culture, each country has its own characteristic culture. Besides that, every country is living in different conditions and situations, distinguishing them from the rest of the Arab States in several features and aspects.

This section allows readers to have a general idea of the culture in this region and the difficulties and the problems they face related to peace studies and Education for Peace. Shedding light on these difficulties builds the needed basis for an in-depth detailed analysis that focuses on the challenges experienced by each country separately. An excellent example is a study I undertook in Syria in the fourth and fifth chapters.

As mentioned before, this study's objective is to find means to modify the curriculum in turbulent and war-torn countries to support education, specifically Education for Peace for a culture of peace. For this purpose, the next chapter moves from the holistic picture to examine the situation in a smaller field by zooming into Syrian Education. Focusing on the Syrian curriculum will allow us to look closely and understand the differing factors that affect an Education for Peace. The study highlights different aspects of the curriculum to achieve an Education for Peace and a culture of peace.

SECTION II: FIELD CASE STUDIES

Primary School in Syria and The First Syrian Youth Conference

Chapter Four

The Syrian Curriculum

Field Case Studies - Methodology of Research

Figure 28 Education Under Attack[29]

"Access, quality, and system strengthening cannot be compromised in times of crisis. Educators must be empowered to deliver life-saving knowledge & skills to those affected by crisis."

(UNESCO, 2017: 6).

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[29] Almohibany, Amer (2017), *Education Under Attack*, AFP/ Getty, Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, https://eua2018.protectingeducation.org/syria, 22 April 2022.

4.1 Introduction:

In this section, we move from the broad picture that explains the problems facing education in the Arab world to the specific focus on Syria. For this aim, as was acknowledged earlier in the introduction, two qualitative case studies about the Syrian school curriculum are provided. They investigate which, if any, elements of Education for Peace are already included in the primary school curriculum in Syria and examine the specific needs of students during the crisis. In addition to that, the Syrian curriculum is analysed and evaluated, and the following methods are studied. This allows us to determine what peace elements need to be included to address the students' needs for a realistic change based on the literature review, my experience in the field, and interviews with key actors.

My research methodology was based on:

1) Literature review focused on peace education and peace studies and 2) Primary research through qualitative research based on ethnographic fieldwork in Damascus, Syria including I) Participatory Observation, II) Interviews, III) Focus Groups.

- The first field study was conducted in a Primary school in Damascus, Syria, during three different field visits in the years of 2015, 2018, and 2019. Additionally, follow-up contact was conducted virtually in 2020 and 2021.

- The second field study focused on the First Syrian Youth Conference which was held in 2018, in Damascus, Syria. One hundred fifty young people from different governorates and ages were divided into groups to express their ideas and explain their visions regarding school concerns.

- A research visit was undertaken at the Ministry of Education. The object was to gather information regarding the construction and operationalisation of the Curriculum and to interview key figures in the Ministry of Education.

4.2 Stages of education in Syria:

The stages of education in Syria are: Kindergarten, Basic Education, High School, and Higher Education which includes Institutes and Universities.

- Kindergarten is a non-compulsory level of education that lasts from two to three years. Children start kindergarten generally at age three to four and go until six. It is followed by basic education which is compulsory and free.

- Basic education is a nine-year educational stage starting from the first grade until the ninth grade. It is divided into two cycles:

    - The first cycle includes first to sixth grades. Pupils start the first grade at age six and they will start the sixth grade at age 11.

    - The second cycle includes seventh to ninth grades. Pupils start the seventh grade at age 12 and the ninth grade at age 14 (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2020: 2).

- High School is free, but it is not compulsory. All high school options start at age 15 and continue for three years, ending at age 18. There are two types of high school education, as described below:

    - General secondary education: this high school education leads to tertiary higher education studies upon completion, depending on their final grades for their general secondary education. There are two branches of the general secondary education as follows:

- Scientific – this route is in preparation for university studies in the fields of engineering, medicine, and other STEM fields.

- Literary – this route is in preparation for university studies in the fields of the humanities and social sciences.

- Secondary vocational education: This high school education leads to a technical degree upon completion (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2021: 9). After receiving the secondary vocational education, students can opt to continue further education in institutes. Students would select one of the fields of study to specialise in. The fields include commerce, industry, vocational education for women's arts, agriculture, tourism and hotels, informatics, and similar fields. The vocational secondary certificate entitles its holder to pursue their university or technical studies in accordance with the admission terms and criteria approved by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. It also entitles them to obtain a license to practice in the profession they studied after completing the procedures for granting the license with the appropriate authorities (Syrian Ministry of Higher Education, 2021: 2).

- Tertiary Higher Education includes both public and private entities. Public higher education is funded by the government with students paying a nominal fee (Syrian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2021b: 1- 4), whereas private higher education is not funded by the government and students must pay tuition fees (ranging from 300 euros to 1700 euros per year, depending on the field) (Syrian Council of Higher Education, 2022: 1). Students generally start studying at Higher Education at 18-19 years of age. There are the following types of schools:

- Institutes: These are schools that offer two-year degrees after secondary education. The institutes include the Institutes of Accounting, Institute of Business Administration, Computer Technical Institute, Legal Institute, and more. In each graduating class, the student who received the highest grade is offered a place to continue their studies in a related field at the university level (Syrian Ministry of Higher Education, 2013: 1).

- Universities: These are schools that offer four-year degrees for most fields (some fields, such as engineering and medicine require more years) after general secondary education. These schools offer both in-person and distance learning models of study along with different pathways to a university degree (including parallel education for students who didn't receive the qualifying grades for certain fields and studies, open education and virtual education). Beyond the undergraduate level, there are other postgraduate studies which include master´s degrees and PhD (Syrian Ministry of Higher Education, 2022).

4.3 Case study 1: Primary School:

Figure 29 Children of Syria…a Generation Threatened by the Challenges of Education[30]

I performed a field study to obtain primary information and to answer the aforementioned research questions. This particular case study concerned a private primary school in the countryside of Damascus. Several field visits to the school in 2015, 2018 and 2019 were undertaken. Interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders, including journalists, school counselors, supervisors, teachers, and others. These key actors provided information about the

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[30] Yacoub, Yacoub (2019), "After Almost Ten Years of War in Syria, More Than Half of Children Continue to be Deprived of Education", UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/after-almost-ten-years-war-syria-more-half-children-continue-be-deprived-education, 1 June 2022.

schooling system and the curriculum, as well as the possibility of applying peace education ideas to meet students' needs.

4.3.1 Reasons for Choosing this School: Location, Diversity and Experienced Teaching Team:

The case study was focused on a private elementary school for several reasons, one of which is its location. It is relatively close to the center of Damascus. The school is in a city in southern Syria. Administratively, it is part of the Damascus Countryside Governorate. Secondly, it is in a residential area. Thirdly, it is in a relatively safe area even though it borders areas in conflict. The city was a refuge to numerous displaced people coming from these areas of unrest due to the severe armed conflict since the beginning of the Syrian crisis.

Another reason for choosing the school is the teaching staff in the school. Collectively, they have deep experience in teaching and demonstrated expertise in understanding the schooling system in the country. They taught in public schools as well as in private schools and private institutions to improve students' performance. The principal of the school is a case in point. She has 40 years of experience in school management in both the public and private sectors and is deeply immersed in the day-to-day running of the school. Her insights are particularly important in drawing a clear picture of the system starting from teaching qualifications. The school's excellent reputation is widely held at the local level and the Damascus countryside level even during the time of war. This is evidenced by the school's first-place rank in the country's educational competition for Math and English for two years.

Reputation aside, it is an opportunity to analyse the similarities and the differences among all educational institutions in the country, public and private. For these reasons, I selected the

school for the study taking into consideration that the curricula and the schooling system in Syria are by law unified in public and private schools where syllabus and learning materials are designed, printed, and distributed by the Ministry of Education (Immerstein and Al-Shaikhly, 2016).

4.3.2 The School Infrastructure:

The building of the school is 20 years old, but the building's maintenance is being well taken care of in addition to a frequent replacement of equipment. Maintenance during the war expectedly declined in comparison to other years but the management gave their best efforts. The building consists of three floors and two courtyards. The school is distributed as follows:

- There are 17 classes divided into the three floors and every class has between 25 to 30 students.
- Two Teaching Aid rooms, a Library Room, a Computer Room, a Music Room, an Art Room, a Sports Room, and a room dedicated to strengthening weak students.
- The school principal's room, the director delegated by the Ministry of Education's room, the room of the principal's assistance, a Secretariat and Documentation room, a doctor's room, a psychological counselor's room, a room for the cleaning staff, a Printing room for photocopying exam questions and other related study papers.
- There are two Courtyards in the school, one of which is relatively small where there are children's games such as swings. Many plants and flowers were planted to add beauty to the school. In addition to placing colorful drawings for children on all internal and external walls of the school. The other Courtyard is large for sports activities and breaks between classes.
- A reception room, a small canteen, a small kitchen, seven girls' bathrooms and seven boys' bathrooms, five bathrooms for the first grade and five staff's bathrooms.

4.3.3 The Goals of this Study Were to Collect Information About:

1- <u>Schools System:</u>

- The yearly school schedule.

- The schools' followed educational system.

- The syllabus and materials included in the curriculum.

- The class distribution System.

- The allocated hours for each subject.

- The difference between public and private schools.

2- Curriculum and Teachers' Guide:

- Curriculum's strengths and weaknesses points based on teachers' assessments.

- Teachers' guide's strengths and weaknesses based on teachers' assessments.

- Teachers' guide and curriculum based on Ministry of Education Members' assessments.

- Discussing teaching methods.

- Recommendations for improvements.

3- Communication:

- School system work mechanics.

- The relationship between teachers and administration.

- The relationship between teachers and students.

- The relationship between students and administration.

- The relationship among students.

4- Teaching staff:

- Teachers' required qualifications.

- Distributing professors.

- Gender.

5- Needs:

- Students' needs based on teachers' assessments.

- Teachers' needs:

    - Professionally

    - Psychologically

- **Teachers' Training:**

- The followed system in teachers' training.

- Evaluation of teacher training courses.

- Teachers' trainers based on teachers' assessments.

6- Participatory Aims:

a. Participatory Observation in teacher's training courses at the school.

b. Participatory Observation in daily school classes.

4.3.4 School System:

The school has around 500 students from different backgrounds. The ages range from 6 to 11 years old (first to the sixth grades) and the staff consists of 54 members, 33 of them are the teaching team divided as follows:

- Twenty-one administrators including the principal, the principal's assistant, the director delegated by the Ministry of Education, the secretariat, the social counselor, the responsible for teaching aids, the printing room responsible, the receptionist, the canteen responsible, five bus supervisors and five bus drivers.

- Nineteen teachers for first, second and third grades: six class teachers, two English teachers, two French teachers, two Science teachers, two teachers of informatics and technology, two Sports teachers, two Art teachers, and two Music teachers.

- Fourteen teachers for fourth, fifth, and sixth grades: three Arabic teachers, three Mathematics teachers, a Science teacher, a Social Science teacher, Three English teachers, two French teachers, and a Religions teacher (Islamic and Christian).

4.3.5 The Methodology:

My primary research method was conducting interviews with the key figures working in the field and teaching staff (principals, teachers, school guides' supervisors, school counselors, and journalists). It is important to highlight that the teachers and the other key contributors in this study are kept unnamed for security purposes and for their personal safety. In the beginning, I contacted the principal of the school, who greatly facilitated interviews with the teaching team and attended teachers' training courses over a period of two months, from June until August 2015. The teachers I interviewed taught different subjects and different grades at the primary level. Finally, I prolonged my observation for two more years revisiting the school in 2018 and 2019. I met and interviewed the same (and different) staff members to resume my observation of any modifications or development.

The school has teachers who have been teaching for about 20 years. Other teachers change from time to time. Over the course of my visits, there have been many changes to the teaching staff. During the three years I visited the school; some teachers did not change. However, many teachers left the school, and many new teachers joined the teaching team; some were experienced, and others recently graduated with limited teaching experience. The ages of the teachers ranged

from twenty-six to fifty-five years old. The number of female teachers exceeded that of male teachers in all three years, with four male teachers to the rest of the female teachers.

The participatory observation courses I attended were during the summer holiday. These courses are held yearly for two reasons. These courses help the school to evaluate new applicants for a teaching post at school. The teachers usually are asked to deliver a lesson of their choice. At the same time, these courses provide training courses for new and old teachers in the school to enrich teaching methods and discuss old and new approaches. The courses were held twice a week, where teachers were divided into three classes, each class containing seven teachers to 11 teachers, between nominated teachers and schoolteachers. Getting students to participate in these courses during summertime is not easy. The school has to ask some families to permit their children to participate in these courses. Usually, 3 to 5 students of different levels of the same and different grades participate. Students are generally changed every one to two weeks. The principal with the directorate delegated by the Ministry of Education or the school counselor also joins these courses. They are moving between classes to observe the biggest possible number of teachers. In the classes held for examining the nominated teachers, most attended teachers are from the same major as the nominated teachers for a better assessment. At the end of the lesson, schoolteachers give some constructive advice to the nominated teacher. After that, a meeting is held separately with the school principal to discuss the final decision on whether the school accepts, rejects, or gives the teacher another chance.

In 2019, I attended regular classes during the school year. I was in the class with about 30 students while teachers gave curriculum lessons. I observed the teaching methods and students' interaction with the teacher using the school materials. I attended classes for different subjects and

different grade levels. It was apparent to me the enormous amount of effort teachers put into preparing the lesson and getting the students' attention and participation.

I interviewed the teachers individually and in groups. I talked to each teacher individually, asking about general and detailed information. Afterward, I met with a group of teachers and gave them all one question to talk about. Through this method, there was room for constructive discussions and the development of ideas. Each professor built their answer on other teachers' answers, sometimes agreeing with their opinions, adding more details, and other times disagreeing with them, giving reasons for their stands. The discussions were encouraged among professors about some questions, which allowed constructive dialogue and exchange of new ideas.

I spoke with some of the students' parents and school subjects' supervisors during my visits. I also conducted interviews with members of the Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation who participated in the developed curricula. All of that helped form a clear picture of the educational school system in Syria.

4.3.6 Main Teacher Interview Questions:

The goal of this study is to examine whether the curriculum meets the students' needs and provide the necessary support to deal with the current situation by investigating if there are any elements of Education of Peace in the materials and teaching methods.

The questions which focused on with the educational staff were:

1- Are the new curricula providing the needed support and guidance to deal with the current situation of crisis?

2- What are the psychological impacts on students because of the current situation? And does the education system provide the needed psychological support?

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3- Are Education for Peace values emphasised during lessons? If not, why in your opinion?

4- Does the curriculum give a helping hand to gain and develop skills?

5- Is the teacher's guide easy to understand and follow?

6- Are the provided materials and activities possible to implement?

7- How are teacher training courses organized?

8- What is the system used in training the trainers?

9- How often do teachers receive training and what are the benefits and the outcomes?

10- What, in your opinion, can be done to improve the provided quality?

4.3.7 Curriculum-Related Key Questions:

For some of the questions related to the Syrian curricula, teachers could not provide the required information. With the aim to collect details about the standards of the curriculum, an appointment was made from the curriculum directorate in the Syrian Ministry of Education in June 2015. The target was to investigate the standards and the criteria on which the curriculum was built besides requesting the required authorization to facilitate the research. From the Syrian Ministry of Education, I acquired official documents containing information about the Syrian education system and the Syrian curriculum as well as related decisions. The information these documents conveyed, provided me with the knowledge I was looking for on the subject of:

1- What are the standards and the principles that the Syrian curriculum is built on?

2- What are the curriculum's aims?

3- Does the Syrian curriculum have any elements that support Education for Peace?

4- Are there any concepts of Education for Peace in the Syrian curricula?

5- What are the qualifications and competencies required of teachers according to the standards of the Syrian curriculum and the Ministry of Education?

4.3.8 The Outcomes:

- Obtaining detailed information to clearly understand the Syrian educational system.

- The obtained data was a primary source of information that can be the base of research for future studies.

- Standards and principles on which the curriculum was defined.

- The required teachers' qualifications according to the standards of the Syrian curriculum.

- Highlighting the obstacles that the teaching team is facing in dealing with the curriculum and the teachers' guide.

- Underlining the gaps in teachers' preparation and training.

- Underlining the gaps between the theoretical and practical teaching methods.

- This information helped shed light on the possibility of finding solutions that fit the current reality of the country.

4.4 Background of the Syrian Education System:

The previous case studies enabled a comprehensive understanding of the Syrian Educational system. This detailed information not only helped to build the research but also took the research in the right direction. Below are some of the details collected, beginning with the internal structure of the school system.

4.4.1 The Structural Educational System of Schools:

It is important to thoroughly emphasise that the qualifications of teachers are a critical matter in the education system. According to UNICEF by 2019 around 5,400 teachers, which form 13%, are the number of the Syrian teachers and education personnel who have been trained, however, the target is to train around 42,600 teachers (UNICEF, 2019b: 1). In Syria, there are two kinds of qualifications determined by the Ministry of Education. Before 1999, teachers earned their teaching certificates by "completing a two-year post-secondary program at an intermediate institute" (Immerstein and Al-Shaikhly, 2016), or it was sufficient to present a secondary school certificate and a certificate of service from a former school to be a teacher for the first to fourth grades, where one teacher gives most of the subjects (except for English, Sport, Art, Math, and Science in English, French, and Informatics). For the sixth and seventh grades, each teacher had to be specialised in the subject she/he was teaching by having a higher education degree[31].

After 1999, the Ministry of Education issued new instructions that all teachers for all grades (first to sixth) should have a higher education degree. Teachers have to obtain a four-year bachelor's degree specialising in one subject including teaching methodologies. Bachelor's degree graduates from fields other than degrees in Education, especially the ones with aims to occupy positions like school principals in private facilities, can study a one-year post-graduate program to achieve a teaching qualifying certificate namely "Diploma in Education". In public schools, the Ministry of Education chooses and appoints teachers. Private schools and private institutions in Syria are not financially supported by the government (Immerstein and Al-Shaikhly, 2016). In private schools, principals choose teachers and train them through training courses at schools. However, the Ministry of Education sends a delegated director to the private schools on a daily

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[31] Interview with a Ministry of Education school supervisor, Damascus, Syria, 2015.

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basis to supervise the preparation and performance of teachers. Furthermore, The Ministry appoints supervisors who visit schools regularly to oversee the general performance of the school, including the performance of the principal, administrators, school records, students' performance, achievements, and results in addition to the performance of the teachers who teach only the first four grades. Adding to that, whenever there are modifications or changes in the curricula, the Ministry carries on training courses for teachers in public as well as private schools.[32]

As indicated above, both public and private sectors are under the same supervision and censorship of the Ministry of Education. Primary education is compulsory and free, and it is funded by the government (Immerstein and Al-Shaikhly, 2016). The basic curriculum is the same in both sectors and is prepared by specialized committees at the Ministry of Education. The curriculum contains the following subjects: Religious Education, Arabic Language, English, Science, Social Studies, Physics and Chemistry, Mathematics, Sport, Art, Music, and National Education. At the beginning of every year, a study plan is issued by the Ministry of Education, which determines the subjects, the number of classes for each material (figure 30), the graded mark for each material and the criteria for evaluating students' performance. Once a month, specialist instructors for each subject from the Ministry visit public and private schools to evaluate the performance of teachers. These rules are applied to both private and public schools to make sure that the curriculum is given exactly as it is set by the Ministry of Education. However, there is a possibility to add more materials to enrich the curriculum in private schools.[33]

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[32] Interview with the school principal, Damascus, Syria, on 10 June 2015.
[33] Interview with the school principal, Damascus, Syria, on 10 June 2015.

Basic Education: Weekly Lesson Timetable (2014-2015)

NUMBER OF WEEKLY PERIODS* IN EACH GRADE

SUBJECTS		FIRST CYCLE				SECOND CYCLE				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Religious Education		1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Arabic Language		10	9	8	8	7	7	6	6	6
Foreign Language	English	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	French	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	3
	Russian	-	-	-	-	-	-	2**		
Mathematics		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
Social Studies		1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
Science and Health Education		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
Music Education		2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Art Education		2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
Physical Education		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Informatics		-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-
Sub-total		27	27	27	27	27	27	30	30	30
Extra Activities	Physical and Science Activities	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Professional Education	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2
	Informatics	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
	Scout Activities	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-
Total Weekly Periods		31	31	30	30	31	31	32	33	32

Source: Syrian Ministry of Education
*Definition: Period = 45 minute class
** In grade 7, students choose between French or Russian to fulfill foreign language requirements (in addition to English.)
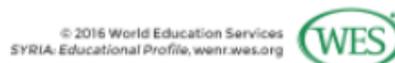
Figure 30 Basic Education: Weekly Lesson Timetable[34]

Private schools are allowed to add some material to all grades (such as Math and Science in English, Informatics and French language) under the approval of the Ministry of Education. The school must submit a formal request including a copy of the new material to the Ministry for its

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[34]Syrian Ministry of Education (2016), "Basic Education: Weekly lesson time table", World Education News +Reviews (WENR), https://wenr.wes.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/WENR-0416-Syria-Tables-new2.png, 22 April 2022.

approval. Moreover, they can add religious education and social studies for the first and second grades even though these two subjects are not included in the study plan of the Ministry of Education in public schools.[35]

One of the reasons that private schools have the space to add more subjects and invest more hours in some subjects is because the schooling hours of private schools are longer compared to public schools, 29 hours weekly, the class is 45 minutes; 6 classes for four days and 5 classes for one day, five days a week (from Sunday to Thursday) (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2022). However, during the current crisis, some public and private schools have decreased the schooling hours due to many problems such as security concerns, arriving before dark, and the unavailability of electricity and water. Moreover, schools are also affected by the increasing number of students due to the high number of displaced families who are moving from hot areas to safer ones. To resolve this problem, public schools working in line with the decision of the Ministry of Education have started a new system called half-day schooling. In this system, each school has two periods of schooling. The morning period (7:30 to 11:50) and the afternoon period for different students (12:00 to 16:45 or 15:50 during the winter). For the last two years, the school periods become longer from (7.30 to 12:00 and then from 12.30 to 17:00). This system is designed to increase the capacity of schools, but the increase in the students' number remains a challenge. Class sizes in public schools could be around 40 students however some public schools can reach up to 65 students in one class while the number in private schools ranges from 24 to 30 students.[36]

The above overview of the structural educational system of schools looks organized and well managed. However, the question remains whether this system meets students' needs. Does it

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[35] Interview with the school principal, Damascus, Syria, on 10 June 2015.
[36] Interview with the school Principal, Damascus, Syria, in 2015 and 2019.

contain the needed elements to prepare students to face the current situation and work for a peaceful future? To answer these questions, it is essential to identify first the needs of these students, because as the principal said, "The child before the crisis is not the same child after the crisis".[37]

4.4.2 The Syrian Curriculum:

Given the many needs of students, it is important that the curriculum contains elements to help children deal with the impact of violence on their own lives. As it was mentioned in the previous chapters Education for Peace does not need to be imparted as a separate subject in the curriculum and it can be integrated and included into a curriculum through different ways and methods to make "every lesson a peace and every teacher a peace teacher" (UNESCO, 2001: 9). Before it was highlighted that, the curriculum has a strong impact on the outcomes of students at the individual, social, national, and global levels. Therefore, a solid coherent curriculum that supports Peace Education decreases the likelihood that students experience the curriculum "as a package of fragmented pieces of knowledge" that has nothing to do with their reality because such a curriculum unifies the content of different subjects with a student's life as a whole (UNESCO, 2001: 9).

To evaluate the Syrian curriculum and underline what is needed, several facts need to be studied. First, what are the standards and the goals on which the Syrian curriculum is built? Do the concepts of the curriculum include the concepts of Education for Peace? How much space is given to discuss the values of Education for Peace? Finally, are teachers employing these values in the context of the Syrian crisis.

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[37] Interview with the school Principal, Damascus, Syria, on 10 June 2015.

Examining the standards, the goals, and the framework that the Syrian curriculum is based on comes from the belief that every successful project and target in life needs proper planning and the right framework. Whenever we start a new project, we are required to make sure that a plan is drawn up, resources are available, steps are organized and the goals we aim to achieve are clear. This concept applies to all processes and education is not an exception. Education is similar to constructing a building: both of them need a strong foundation. Curricula represent the foundation of education, and it requires the same set of procedures mentioned above. As John Franklin Bobbitt mentions in his book *The Curriculum,* which is the first published textbook highlighting this subject, the word curriculum is Latin for "race-course." Bobbitt adds that the curriculum is the course or "a series of deeds" children and youth must do and "*experiences* by way of developing abilities… to be in all respects what adults should be" towards the success of society (Bobbitt, 1918: 42; italics in the original).

In case of war or crisis like the Syrian crisis, there is a need for a school curriculum designed in a way that focuses on peaceful ways of living together and working towards a peaceful future by including Education for Peace values in school texts, teachers' handbooks, and teacher training courses. There is a need for a curriculum prepared carefully with intelligible instructions and visions for both teachers and students. In order to know if the Syrian curriculum includes the values and the objectives of Education for Peace. The Syrian Ministry of Education and specifically the curriculum department is the best place to start my research from.

4.4.3 The Standards of the Syrian Curriculum:

Figure 31 Second Grade School Books[38]

In June 2015, a visit was paid to the curriculum directorate in the Syrian Ministry of Education to collect some information about the standards and get authorization to facilitate the research. Surprisingly, there was no clear understanding of Peace Education or its principles and aims. The whole concept of Peace Education is encapsulated in one notion. The entire idea of

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[38] Second Grade School Books, at the School in the study, Damascus, 2022.

peace is summed up and has been reduced to solely referring to peace as the state of not being in war. Peace Education was understood as mainly the absence of wars; negative peace. Upon asking about the standards of the curriculum, I understood that in 2005 the standards and criteria of the curriculum, including the goals, were set by a specialized committee from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. In 2006, it was approved, and, in 2008, the new curriculum was prepared. The standards were the outcome of the committee members' experience and research of many Arab and Foreign Curricula.[39]

These standards are documented in ten volumes. Briefly, all the values in the curriculum are built on four main standards: belonging to the country, respect, collective work and the environment. In May 2015, the Ministry of Education issued a new decision N. 943/1217 to adopt the below-mentioned general educational goals and the future vision of pre-university education in developing the Syrian curriculum (Al-Wezz, 2015). Later, I discovered that these values already existed in the standards the Syrian programs are built on. This decision only emphasizes these values and vision for a better functioning curriculum that fits the current situation.

The future vision for pre-university education is to build a modern education system that is able to: (1) keep up with the rapid developments in all fields, (2) establish the concept of the nation, the state and citizenship, and enhance the sense of national belonging, (3) promote democracy-building and democracy development to be the basis of life in society, (4) respect diversity, (5) implant general humanitarian values, (6) and build a balanced citizen from national scientific, cognitive, affective, behavioural, psychological, social and physical aspects (Al-Wezz, 2015: 2).

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[39]Interview by phone with an (anonymous) School Supervisors' Guide at the Department of Education under the Ministry of Education, Damascus, Syria on 13 June 2015.

Moreover, this educational system also depends on the educational content which is: (1) up-to-date, (2) based on our heritage [40], (3) targeting the aspirations of our people, (4) related to life and the labor market, (5) ensuring that all teachers are provided with the skills that support their contributions in the development of the intellectual, social and economic productions, and achieving a comprehensive and sustainable development, (6) and contributing to building a nation that can protect its land, rights, safety, sovereignty and compete on the global level (Al-Wezz, 2015: 2).

The component of the vision and the educational content were impressive. These components support the elements of Education for Peace for a modern up-to-date civilised society. A society that respects others and works for a fruitful future. The aims of the pre-university education of the Syrian curriculum are inside the frame of Education for Peace. The aims contain all the elements and the components of Education for Peace, even the four levels of Education for Peace which were mentioned in previous chapters: the individual or self-development level, the school or community level, the national level, and the global level are all taken into consideration.

At the individual or self-development level, the pre-university education aims to build a critical, innovative, and initiative learner who has a balanced personality, critical independent free-thinking, and communication and conflict resolution skills. The student should be equipped with the required knowledge and skills for a practical or academic future life. The aims envisage learners who love life and respect all kinds of jobs, students who are aware of not only their talents and strengths but also their points of weakness they are seeking to overcome. On the community level, the learners should be respectful of other people's feelings and opinions in their actions and behaviours. They should respect human rights, particularly the rights of children and women.

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[40] 'Our' is usually used to refer to the Syrian heritage which is part of the Arab's heritage.

Furthermore, the learners should be aware of their responsibility towards family, realizing the importance of family cohesion and its role in building society. Finally, the learners should be capable of doing collective and volunteer work. On the national level, the list of aims is very long and includes that learners should (1) believe in the issues of their homeland and be ready to defend it and to resist any aggression, (2) be proud of the history, the heritage and the civilization of the nation, (3) be law-abiding, honest and aware of their rights and duties, (4) be aware of the religious and ethnic diversity of the homeland and knowing the common points and shared destiny that unifies the Syrian people under a common state, (5) be aware of their role in building the future of their nation, (6) be aware that tolerance, coexistence, and collaborative efforts are the sources of the wealth of the nation and its strength and impregnability, (7) be proud of their language and have the sense of belonging to the Arab nation and adopting its just causes, and a defender of the unity of its lands. Finally, on the global level, the learner should be a connoisseur of art and beauty. Furthermore, the learner should work to protect public and private property, and the environment, and guide the use of resources. In addition, the learner should be open to other cultures (Al-Wezz, 2015: 3).

4.4.4 The Teaching-Learning Process:

After analysing the standards of the curriculum and highlighting the aims that the Ministry of Education wants to deliver, the next question is what are the methods by which these aims can be communicated to students through the curriculum. According to one of the heads of schools' social guidance who supervised around 150 schools,[41] all subjects of the Syrian curriculum are built on three dimensions associated with three aims or components: the cognitive, the

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[41] Interview with heads of school's social guidance, Damascus, Syria on 9 June 2015.

behavioural/dynamic, and the affective components (Figure 33). For example, in geography, there is a lesson about Barada River, the main river in Damascus. The cognitive goal refers to the students gaining new information such as the fact that the river originates in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains and ends up in Lake Al-Utaybah. The behavioural goal is related to movement and kinesthetic learning and could be achieved by having students draw this river on the map. In the same lesson, the teacher could explain the importance of keeping this river clean and how rivers are important for the environment, which fulfills the affective aim. These three aims can be applied to all subjects, including Mathematics. For example, an equation may state that, "A boy has seven apples. He gave four apples to a poor man he saw in the street and gave another apple to his hungry friend and finally he gave another apple to his little brother. Now how many apples are he left with?" The cognitive goal here is the subtraction operation. Writing the numbers of this equation $7-(4+1+1)=1$ is the behavioural/dynamic goal. The idea of giving or sharing with others is the affection goal which is given to students through the text.[42]

These three elements are reflected in the general and the specific goals of each lesson. In the math example above, the specific goal is learning subtraction and the general goal is encouraging the idea of sharing. Therefore, what should be done to influence the curriculum is not changing or modifying the subjects. That is simply because it is impossible to change subjects. How is it possible to change math or science? Therefore, a change in the curriculum can be made by adapting the subjects to serve the three aims and especially the affection goal in a way that fits the current situation and prepares students for the future.[43]

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[42] Interview with heads of school's social guidance, Syria on 9 June 2015.
[43] Interview with heads of school's social guidance, Syria on 9 June 2015.
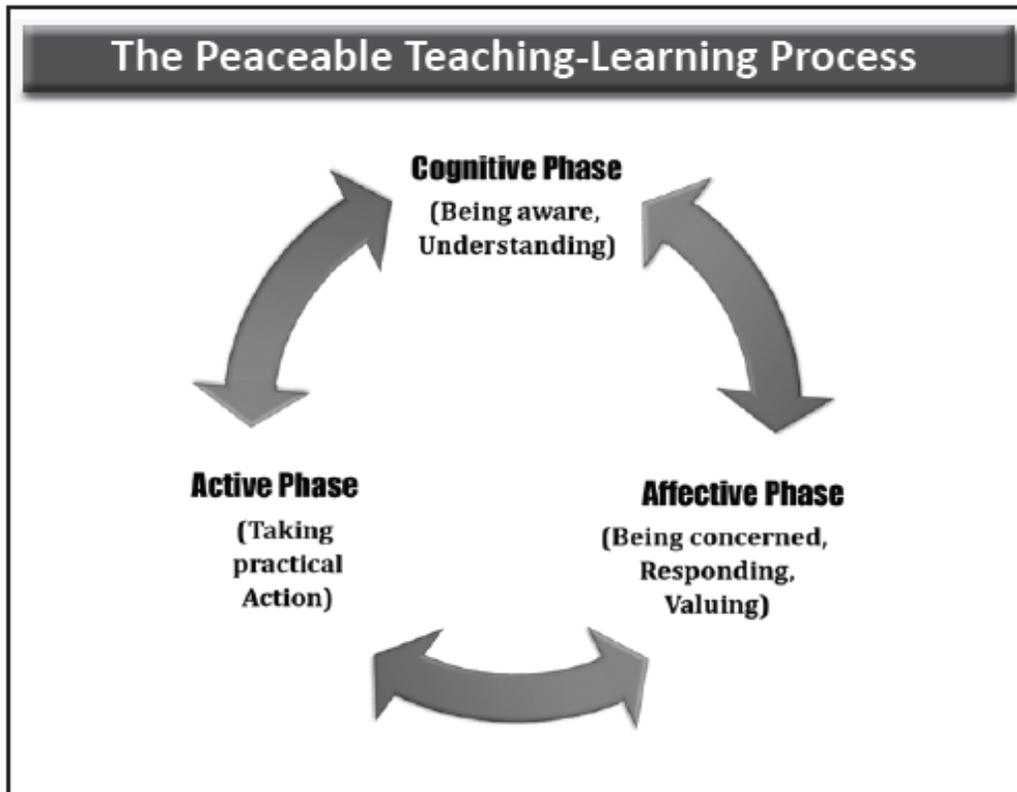
Figure 32 The Peaceable Teaching-Learning Process[44]

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[44] NAVARRO-CASTRO, LORETA and JASMIN NARIO-GALACE (2010), *Peace Education: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace,* 2nd Edition, Quezon City, Philippines, Miriam College, Center for Peace Education, p. 29.

4.5 Case study 2:

Figure 33 The First Youth Forum Conference[45]

The First Youth Forum Conference was organized two years after the commencement of the developed curricula. It was held on the time of 22-24 June 2018 in Damascus University, Syria. The conference was organized by the National Union of Syrian Students under the title of "Meeting and Rising". It was attended by One hundred fifty young people from different governorates, ages, and backgrounds. The conference aims to give the youth from 11 to 17 years old of age the opportunity to express their ideas and explain their visions regarding school concerns. Over the above, listening to their ideas is a part of an effective partnership between students and the educational system (Syrian Arab News Agency, 2018).

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[45] Syrian Arab News Agency SANA (2018), "(Meeting and Rising), Conference of Syrian Youth", SANA, http://www.sana.sy/?p=770849, 1 June 2022.

4.5.1 The Rationale for the Conference:

1- Youth represent a large segment of society and deserves to have a role in decision-making.

2- Youth are in a constant search for identity.

3- Work to convey the voice of young people to positions of responsibility and authority.

4- Work on creating a productive and effective dialogue and constructive and positive criticism.

5- Youth are the foundation and the nucleus of society.

6- The duty of the previous generation is to provide support to the new one.

The students were divided into groups to discuss two main topics. To start with, the student's needs from the school. That includes the development of the communication regarding educational curricula and educational staff along with understanding and accepting their ideas and on top considering putting what is possible into action. The second topic is related to the youth's evaluation of the kind of work associations and organizations are carrying on, specifically the newly established ones with slogans and work plans concentrating on building society (Hindi, 2018).

The aim of the conference as Nizar Yared, the president of the Syrian Youth conference put it "The conference aims to come up with foundation recommendations for the "Syrian Forum", and to devote the National Assembly for Syrian Youth as an annual activity that every year takes place in a different governorate, and to create a conscious and educated generation that contributes to building a healthy future. It also contributes to perpetuating the culture of volunteerism as a method of thinking, a course of action, and a national awareness" (Abdel Aziz Mahmoud, 2018). The conference was attended by key figures in the education system. The Minister of Education, representatives of members of the People's Assembly and the president of the Scouts of Syria

joined the dialogue as well. The Minister of Education responded to numerous numbers of students' inquiries and underlined some future solutions.

My responsibilities required, as a part of the organising team of the conference, to communicate with the students, the facilitators, and the organizers, and finally to participate in the conference's final report. As mentioned earlier, the students were divided into10 groups to discuss the above monitored two topics through various questions. The dialogue was built on understanding and collaboration and the students were very considerate, cooperative, and active. At every table, there were a facilitator and a note-taker. The dialogue started with the facilitators explaining to the students the terms of

1- Active listening.

2- Respecting the principles of criticism.

3- Focusing on positive thinking.

4- Respecting the opinion of others.

5- Expressing your opinion and breaking the barriers of fear.

6- Maintaining calm and order.

7- Respect the scheduled time for each question.

The questions that were discussed and explored about the themes and the topics of the first Syrian Youth Conference were divided into two themes:

First Theme:

What do youth need from the school on the topic of communication with teachers, educational curriculum, and areas of extracurricular education? What is the youth's role to achieve that? Evaluate the school's real role in understanding and accepting the youth's ideas and its rule in

applying them at many levels. What is the stand of the youth from achieving the above objects in the day-present, including the public interest?

1- What does the youth want from school?

2- Is there a kind of conflict between students and teachers? What are, if any, the causes in your opinion?

3- What is the method to develop and improve the relationship between the student and the teacher, taking into consideration that there are several distinguished and successful examples of student-teacher relationships?

4- What are the requirements that the youth are seeking from the Ministry of Education and teachers to develop their skills, and the relationships between the student, school and teachers?

5- In your opinion, what are the effective and necessary ways and methods to achieve justice and awareness in schools in terms of motivation and punishment?

6- In your opinion, what do students need to do to improve and beautify schools? What are the tools to achieve this goal?

7- As you know, educational and training means are important tools in delivering educational information at schools. Imagine for a reason these means are not available anymore and it is difficult to purchase new ones. In your opinion, how should youth and students react to this problem and what is the youth's role in providing possible alternatives?

8- What do you know about extracurricular education and activities, and their objectives?

9- Can you, as an interested student, suggest educational approaches and methods along with some skills-related activities that contribute to improving and developing capabilities and meeting youth's needs?

10- Can you suggest an initiative that you find necessary to develop your school?

11- Finally, do you like your school?

Second Theme:

    Most of the associations and organisations, especially the newly established ones, raise slogans and programs calling for building and supporting the Syrian society. How do youth evaluate their work? Do they believe that their work plan supports the youth in the country? What is required from the associations to meet Youth's needs on the psychological, social, awareness, and behavioural levels to develop youth skills to be able to contribute to the construction and work?

1- What are the activities that you joined in the volunteering field and what are the outcomes of this experience?

2- Are the existing associations carrying out their duties towards youth to develop their abilities, and what is the youth's role in that?

3- What is your evaluation and assessment of the associations and organizations' work plans in the present day in terms of objectives - programs - implementation on the ground - interaction with all segments of society and meeting their needs?

4- Imagine that you and your friends were together on a youth gathering evening, and a suggestion came from one of your friends of establishing an association similar to the rest of other areas where associations were recently established. The suggestion was approved and supported by you. In your opinion, what is the first key goal that should be proposed to be the focus of the association work plan? Would you propose:

a. A service aim could be achieved by distributing food and catering to the needy, a "charity association".

b. A development goal concerned with human development and human building.

c. A development goal that deals with social problems that our society suffers from, such as early marriage, arbitrary divorce, unemployment, or other problems.

d. A goal centered around physical and sports activities.

e. An association works with people with special needs or concentrates on dealing with diseases such as cancer, blood diseases and diabetes, for example.

f. Share your ideas and visions that you believe would be suitable for your future association. Then provide justifications explaining the reasons for your decisions. Please take into consideration that all the associations and work projects mentioned above are constrictive and contribute positively to building society.

5- In your opinion, what are the proposed initiatives and activities that it is necessary to be put into action by organizations and associations during the future stage?

➢ The following points were considered by the facilitators:

1- The dialogue should go smoothly and easily, without complications.

2- It is not necessary to adhere to the literal questions of the event. Welcome new ideas if they are useful and fulfilling the purpose.

3- Stay away from school (directed) method of asking questions, giving students space for initiative, critical thinking, and open responses.

4- Each facilitator should review the questions and establish a set time for each question.

Figure 34 Group Discussion[46]

The conference of The First Syrian Youth was a crucial step in developing the communication between students and the educational system. The students conveyed some of the difficulties they are facing related to curriculum and teachers. They shared reasons, from their perspective, for not delivering the curriculum and its values of education of peace correctly. For the same reasons, they suggested some possible solutions to improve the atmosphere and the quality of education for more Education for Peace.

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[46] Syrian Arab News Agency SANA (2018), " (Meeting and Rising), Conference of Syrian Youth", SANA, http://www.sana.sy/?p=770849, 3 June 2022.

Figure 35 The Annual Gathering of the Syrian Youth Forum[47]

4.5.2 Final Highlights of the First Syrian Youth Conference:

The activities of the First Syrian Youth Conference, which was held by the National Union of Syrian Students in cooperation with the Syrian Youth Forum, concluded under the slogan "Meeting and rising", with several highlights and proposals including:

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[47] The First Syrian Youth Forum (2018), **"**The First Syrian Youth Conference**"**,
https://www.facebook.com/TheFirstSyrianYouthForum/photos/pcb.2200456790236448/2200423366906457, 3 June 2022.

- In his speech, Nizar Yared, head of the Syrian Youth Forum, considered the conference a bold step and formed the basic building block and the true seed for activating the role of youth in building their society and achieving their goals. The conference created a free space in which to express themselves and their ideas and put their concerns to those directly concerned, where all proposals and ideas would be communicated to the responsible authorities as work projects that could be launched and implemented. He also indicated that the conference contributed to exchanging experiences among the participants, enhancing their confidence, and strengthening their personalities.

- A member of the Executive Office of the National Union of Syrian Students, Head of the Office of Special Education and Informatics, Darren Suleiman, indicated the importance of this segment of society and the ideas and proposals presented by young students during this conference over three days that express personal strength and a strong will to change reality for the better.

- The question about the possibility of establishing a parliament for young people to express their views and concerns, the response was from the young Sami Karmali, who confirmed that the idea of establishing parliament is useful to help them convey their voices and turn them into actions that enable them to take their real role in society, indicating that they can prove through Parliament their capabilities by involving in society, which contributes to its development.

- Youth said that the conference confirms the state's confidence in the capabilities of the youth, based on the need to exploit and optimally invest their energies was an important step to overcome the problems facing them at this stage of their lives, especially in the field of communication with teachers, educational curricula, and the school in general and its role in

understanding and accepting their ideas and activating them in action, thought and skill, in addition to providing an opportunity to familiarize associations and organizations, especially modern ones, with their interests and aspirations, expressing their thanks and appreciation for the efforts made by the organizers of the conference to make it a success.

The Participants in the Conference Called for:

- Transforming the Syrian Youth Forum into a corporate body with identity and organization under the slogan of 'my homeland is an identity and an affiliation', and to work to activate their role by establishing a parliament for youth within a serious and positive framework and periodic elections.
- Creating effective dialogue spaces through periodic meetings or media platforms on social media webpages to learn about their ideas and aspirations, and thus launch community initiatives by youth.
- Dedicating the National Assembly for Syrian Youth as an annual activity held every year in a governorate and sending periodic messages every six months after probing and collecting them to the concerned officials and activating their role in their schools and society to be real partners in its development and development.

Figure 36 The First Syrian Youth Conference: A Group Photo[48]

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[48] The First Syrian Youth Forum (2018), *The First Syrian Youth Conference: A Group Photo*, https://www.facebook.com/TheFirstSyrianYouthForum/photos/a.1995932337355562/2201914600090667, 31 May 2022.

4.6 The Syrian Ministry of Education's Recent Projects and Future Plans:

The government is trying to find solutions despite the many challenges. As indicated earlier, the curriculum is set by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry is the only authorized entity to make changes to the curriculum. Changing/overhauling the entire curriculum in a short timeframe is currently very difficult, due to both the current situation in the country and the high cost of changing/ printing the curriculum. Therefore, the Ministry is opting for gradual change, by changing/ amending the curriculum of several different grads every year. There is a suggestion is to add a bulletin or a leaflet of four or five pages to be sent to schools akin to a newspaper or mail. The point of this leaflet would be to enrich the curriculum in any subject the Ministry finds a need for more information on it. However, the suggestion is still under consideration.[49]

Another decision has already been approved and is waiting to be implemented. It aims to refocus on some values in the curriculum as mentioned above and update some parts including teaching methods and class management to respond to the current situation.[50] For dropout students, an exam will be held to determine their level and put them back in classes suitable to them (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2015). Unfortunately, the efficacy of this process is questionable, because students who have prolonged absences will be placed with younger students and the age difference could affect the self-confidence of the students returning to school and cause frustration which may lead to violence among students[51]. To counteract these challenges, the Ministry is planning to issue a self-study curriculum for dropout students to catch-up with their peers (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2015). This idea is also controversial, especially for young learners, as they need

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[49] Interview by phone with an (anonymous) School Supervisors' Guide at the Department of Education under the Ministry of Education, Damascus, Syria on 13 June 2015.
[50] Interview by phone with an (anonymous) School Supervisors' Guide at the Department of Education under the Ministry of Education, Damascus, Syria on 13 June 2015.
[51] Interview with a school psychologist at a school in Damascus, Syria, June 2015.

their parents' help and their availability for further assistive study is not guaranteed. However, some intensive courses are starting in a narrow range to help dropout students to equal the level of their peers. Another project for the future is opening intensive classes in all schools for dropout students in which the curriculum of two years will be given in one year. In 2016 with the cooperation of UNICEF, the government started in a limited range this plan where two years or more of dropout students over the age of eight, study an intensive program called curricula (class B) (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2022). In addition, the Ministry, with the financial cooperation from UNICEF and UNESCO, will hold training courses for all teaching staff to be able to provide psychological support (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2015).

One more project for the Ministry is the Syrian electronic schools. The idea of this project is to have the Syrian curriculum electronically online and open electronic centers in camps to enable students to study online.[52] The first part of this project has been put in action since 2016 and has been in progress since. The Syrian curricula and the yearly study plan are available on the Ministry of Education's website (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2022b); however, the lack of electricity creates a major obstacle to achieving the stated goals.

Some projects were already carried out a few years ago by the Ministry of Education to meet the needs of the students. In 2013, the Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation was established. The Center has many tasks including evaluating the performance of students, programs, and public and private educational institutes. The Centre cooperates with institutes to concentrate on educational and psychological measurement to ensure the quality of education, meet the growing developmental needs and upgrade education (The Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation, 2022). For example, regarding the curriculum, many criticisms have

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[52] Interview with (Anonymous) at the Syrian Ministry of Education, Damascus, Syria on 15 June 2015.

been received from schools concerning a math lesson that is monotonous and complicated from the cognitive perspective. The center changed the lesson to be like a guessing game to increase the observation skills of students[53]. Since 2016 until the present, the Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation has been working on changing and modifying the curricula. The developed curricula include a great deal of activities to include and encourage students' participation in the educational program along with encouraging them to collect and obtain the required information through investigating and searching for knowledge through different means such as the Internet[54].

Figure 37 School Curriculum[55]

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[53] Interview by phone with (Anonymous) School Supervisors' Guide at the Department of Education under the Ministry of Education, Damascus, Syria on 13 June 2015.

[54] Interview with a member of The Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Damascus, Syria, on May 2019.

[55] Syrian Ministry of Education (2018), "Implementation of the developed curricula at the beginning of the second semester", Ministry of Education, Syria, http://www.moed.gov.sy/site-/مديرية/الأخبار/المديريات المناهج/قرارات/تطبيق-المناهج-المطورة-مع-بداية-الفصل-الثاني, 29 April 2022.

These are some of the values of the standards the Syrian curriculum has been built on since 2004. These components are the right ones to build any peace curriculum in the world. The Ministry is aware of the need for supporting the curriculum with materials that fit the situation, but the challenges are very big. So far, almost five thousand schools have been destroyed around the country. One in four schools "are estimated to be affected by the crisis in Syria … have been damaged and/or are inaccessible by the formal education system" (UNICEF, 2015b: 29). A huge number of families are displaced. Therefore, in some areas where there are many displaced families, it is common to find many schools that have three daily schooling shifts to accommodate the large cohort of students. Accordingly, the Ministry along with all the state's centers from research and psychological support centers are planning to carry out projects in the future.[56]

4.7 Conclusion:

This chapter advanced the research by moving it from the holistic image to focusing on an atomistic image. It goes from the situation of the educational system in the Arab world to focusing on the educational system in Syria. After a higher-level overview of difficulties facing education in the Arab World, the research narrows to a more in-depth focus by choosing two case studies from Syria. Every educational system in the Arab States has its own characteristics for several reasons. Some States have achieved an improvement in the education, however, other States have more obstacles owing to reasons such as conflicts which is the case in Syria. The case study was conducted in Syria through two main field studies and multiple numbers of interviews with key figures in the educational system. The study was divided into steps to collect information.

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[56] Interview with (Anonymous) at the Syrian Ministry of Education, Damascus, Syria on 15 June 2015.

The first field study occurred in a primary school in Damascus in 2015, 2018, and 2019. This field study delivers information about the structure of the schooling system and the curriculum. This chapter demonstrates that the theoretical part is well organised. Teacher qualifications are an essential element in the education system. Teachers from first to sixth grades should have a higher education degree, a four-year bachelor's degree specialising in one subject. Both public and private sectors are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and share the curriculum and the study plan. The subjects of the curriculum are built on three dimensions connected with three aims: the cognitive, the behavioural/dynamic, and the affective components. As the schooling hours in private schools are longer, they are allowed to add some material to all grades under the approval of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education's delegates supervise teachers' performance, preparation, and school management in both sectors. In case of modifications or changes in the curricula, the Ministry carries on training courses for teachers in public and private schools.

The elementary school case provided the theoretical part, which established the foundation of the research. Then it allows the research to develop by illustrating the practical part through the data of interviews and participatory observations. The structural educational system of schools is organized and well managed. But the question remains whether this system meets students' needs. Does it contain the required elements to prepare students to face the current situation and work for a peaceful future? These questions are explored in the next chapter underlining the gaps in teachers' skills to deliver Education for Peace.

The second case study was the First Syrian Youth Conference. This conference was a vital step that gave students space to reach their voice to the persons in charge. It was a chance for the youth to express, from their perspective, some obstacles they face in the schooling system through

productive dialogue and constructive criticism. The conference was attended by key educational figures, including the Ministry of Education. During the Conference, important topics were discussed, such as the need for youth from school, the student-teacher relationships, punishment and reward methods, and extracurricular education. Furthermore, the youth called for creating adequate dialogue spaces to launch community initiatives by youth and dedicating the National Assembly for Syrian Youth as an annual activity.

The conference gave students the chance to be part of the solution. It allowed them to suggest initiatives, activities, and work plans to support their needs and develop the education system. The conference not only raised the educators' awareness about the students' needs but also the students' awareness about their role and responsibilities in supporting an education system and a curriculum of Peace Education. The conference ended with many recommendations; some of the most important were transforming the youth forum into an institution, establishing a parliament for young people to express their views and concerns and take their role in society, and dedicating their annual gathering.

The curriculum represents the foundation of education. Therefore, a solid, coherent curriculum that supports Peace Education is key to building a culture of peace. A visit was conducted to the curriculum directorate in the Syrian Ministry of Education to evaluate the Syrian curriculum and investigate the standards and the goals of the curriculum. Remarkably, the components of the Syrian curriculum support the elements of Education for Peace. The standards and the concepts meet the required criteria to integrate tools of Peace Education. The four levels of Education for Peace are included: the individual or self-development level, the school or community level, the national level, and the global level. The curriculum tools aim for a modern society to work for a fruitful future.

The chapter demonstrates that the theoretical conclusions and recommendations were based on the appropriate practical foundation. The Ministry of Education is aware of the challenges and the need for a curriculum that fits the current situation and tries to find solutions despite the many challenges. Since 2016 until the present, the Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation has been working on changing and modifying the curricula. Many projects and decisions are in progress, such as curricula (class B). It is an intensive program for the dropout students over the age of eight to study the curriculum for two years in one year. Nevertheless, questions concerning gaps between the paper's theoretical conclusions and practical realities are still present. These questions will be answered in the next chapter. The problems will be investigated through the aforementioned educational case studies.

Chapter Five

Education for Peace &
The Primary School Curriculum in Syria
Tools for Peace Education in the Syrian Context

Photo above: Children are seen in a classroom in Hasakah Province in northeastern Syria on Nov. 19, 2020. Photo by Xinhua/Stringer via Getty Images.

Figure 38 Children in a Classroom[57]

"Curriculum is a systematic and intended packaging of competencies (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes that are underpinned by values)" (UNESCO-IBE, 2012: 30).

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[57] Qaddour, Kinana & Salman Husain (2022), "Syria's Education Crisis: A Sustainable Approach After 11 Years of Conflict", The Middle East Institute, p. 9.

"Curricula are the starting point in preparing future generations and qualifying them to be able to work productively and constructively in order to bring about the required transformation of society"

<div align="right">(Lasfer, 2019: 4)</div>

"The modern sense of the curriculum represents a set of educational experiences that the school readies itself for its students to help them grow in a comprehensive [way]…it should play its role as a means of educational contribute [sic] to the promotion of a culture of peace in the community".

<div align="right">(Belmushi, 2014: 406)</div>

5.1 Introduction:

The findings discussed in the previous chapter were positive and encouraging. The elements and the aims of the Syrian curriculum match and harmonise with the components of Peace Education. It supports Education for Peace which can be integrated into the curriculum. However, despite this foundation, questions remain as to why the curriculum is not being operationalised as intended. There are gaps between the curriculum's theoretical underpinnings and actually delivery. This chapter explores and discusses three points:

- Are curricula relevant to real-life problems in the current situation?

- Are teaching staff well prepared and equipped to support peace elements and focus on peace values? Are they qualified to use these tools and integrate them into the curriculum?

- Finally, do students communicate with the education system to address their psychological and educational needs from schools, teachers, and teaching methods?

This chapter provides the result of two case studies conducted to find what is missing and what is needed to deliver a curriculum that supports Education for Peace. The chapter demonstrated the results of the participatory observation conducted in a school case study over three years in 2015, 2018, and 2019, in addition to the outcomes and the effects of the First Syrian Youth Conference that was held in 2018 in Damascus, Syria. Both case studies aimed to bring out possible solutions by identifying problems and obstacles from the students' points of view and key figures in the education systems.

Figure 39 Creative Spaces for Dialogue[58]

5.2 The Relevance of the Curricula to Everyday Life and the Current Situation: Are the

Curricula Relevant to Daily Life and life Problems? Is there a Specialized Program or Materials

Related to the Current Situation?

Education for Peace aims to equip students with effective tools to understand day-to-day

problems and with better-thinking methods to analyse and find constructive positive solutions.

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[58] Abdel Aziz Mahmoud, Najwa (2018), "The First "Syrian Adolescents" Conference... Creative Spaces
for Dialogue", The Syrian Scientific Informatics Association, https://www.esyria.sy/2018/06/ مؤتمر-اليافعين-السوريين-الأول-مساحات-خلاقة-للحوار , 4 May 2022,

Although the curricula support inquiry and critical thinking, unfortunately, it was pointed out by the interviewed teachers[59] that the curriculum does not fit the current situation. "It did not integrate any life skills, … or psychosocial support programmes" (UNICEF, 2015b: 10). The interview results regarding this point of discussion called attention to the following challenges:

- The curriculum does not include specific materials relevant to the current situation.

- The curriculum does not have specific materials focusing on peace and development.

- In some subjects, a few initiatives and activities support Education for Peace.

Overall, the literature is in agreement with the teachers' assessments, that no particular subject or program discusses the current crisis supporting students in their daily difficulties. The first-grade teacher (number 2)[60] mentioned some peace-related indications in some school subjects. For example, there are many initiatives to spread peace and love in the Religion textbook. Otherwise, sadly, only a few educational activities aim to spread messages about peaceful life methods and their importance at certain levels. A Third-grade teacher (number 3) asserted that the program is similar to a typical school program worldwide. The primary purpose is merely to offer students general information in every field with no specific materials to deal with the current situation. Teachers believe that new concepts should be added to support the peace and the development process. For example, the flexibility in respecting individual differences is missing in the program and needs to be included, English teacher (number 2), added. According to other teachers in the school, Syrian programs should enable children to have access to self-education by providing suitable materials and tools to improve their research and investigation skills[61].

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[59] Interviews with primary school teachers at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, 2015.
[60] Interviews with primary school teachers at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, 2015.
[61] Interviews with primary school teachers at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, 2015.

Not only does the teaching staff believe that the curriculum does not fit the students' needs in the current situation, but a great number of students' parents also agree with the teachers. Through his long experience in the field due to his work as an editor in chief in *Education and Society Magazine*, one of the student's parents[62] formed a general idea about education in Syria through the crisis. He believes that taking the curriculum to another level is essential for meeting students' needs. Reinvigorating the curriculum does not merely mean developing the material. "This kind of curriculum reduces the role of the educational process to be a process which ends with the last line in the curriculum, and reduces the role of the teacher to a prompter." To achieve the whole aim of the curriculum and impart information effectively, teachers should be aware of the curriculum's purpose and the teaching methodology. "The goal of teaching is comprehending the curriculum information even if the curriculum is not delivered in full, i.e., quality not quantity". This cannot be achieved unless the curriculum for primary schools supports the required educational purpose.

> Achieving our goals will be by giving each grade level specific goals and aims to be delivered to students in an extraordinary way. Teachers in this sense do not have to teach certain school books, but rather sources suggested by the Ministry of Education to facilitate achieving the goals. This experiment could be applied in Syria under the supervision of specialized committees. It could be at least started at some levels or in some subjects at a few chosen special schools[63].

In addition, teaching critical thinking skills is essential. This could be done by asking interesting questions to raise students' curiosity. In this way, we could train children to solve problems constructively without violence and deal positively with the difficulties and daily pressure they encounter.

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[62] Interview with a journalist and a parent of a student, Damascus, Syria on 11 June 2015.
[63] Interview with a journalist and a parent of a student, Damascus, Syria on 11 June 2015.

5.3 The Qualification of Teachers to Support Peace Values: The Qualification and Preparation of Teaching Staff to Support Peace Elements and Focus on Peace Values. Are they qualified to use these tools and integrate them into the curriculum?

Owing to the crisis, the educational process confronts many difficulties: "schools have had to reduce their teaching time to accommodate a second shift, many teachers are working with classes that are too large and instructors cannot effectively teach with shortages in furniture, equipment, and instructional materials", among many other factors which has given the feelings that "teaching this curriculum unmanageable" (UNICEF, 2016: 18). Qualified teachers should be able to manage some possible solutions to deliver the aimed goals, but sadly this is not usually the case. Most of the students highlighted the following obstacles from their perspective regarding the curriculum:

- The curriculum is challenging and not easy to follow which could be due to the teaching style.
- The time allotted for the lesson is not enough for teachers to explicate the information.
- Teachers are not prepared or trained to use education methods for peace.

After two years of studying the developed curricula, the students agreed that the developed curriculum is not easy to follow. The materials require students' involvement to be expounded. One of the main themes of the curriculum is students' engagement through activities. However, teachers need more time. They cannot manage to arrange these activities, considering the large number of students in some schools. Research and investigation are other themes to develop students' skills; nevertheless, tools and aids materials may not be available. Taking the above

points into consideration, not to mention that the curriculum itself is intensive, teachers are not able to carry out the job and deliver the aimed peace values[64].

Although there are no specific materials related to the current situation, the curriculum is full of related topics and activities that teachers can use to deal with many problems in daily life. Unfortunately, students believe teachers are not prepared to approach curricula supporting Education for Peace. The majority pointed out that the difficulty of the curriculum might be due to the teaching style. Teachers do not have the needed skills to deliver the required information in the given time. Teachers should help students to develop educational tools for peace such as critical and independent thinking and to build skills like problem-solving, communication, and confidence, among others. To achieve that, teachers need to master these skills themselves beforehand. When teachers face difficulty in comprehending the lesson and delivering it to students, inevitably both teachers and students become frustrated, and it is only a matter of time before the parents feel the same[65]. These difficulties in dealing with the curriculum have created many challenges for teachers, students and parents (UNICEF, 2015b: 17).

An incident reported by some teachers can demonstrate the above argument. Several projects in the curriculum may have more than one correct answer or one correct result. That is because the answer is the outcome of a research or a discussion. However, some teachers were unable to clarify the process or the criteria. As a result, each student and each class had their own answers. Some of these answers were accepted and graded high but other answers were not accepted and were graded low. The correct answer was the one that each teacher chose. As a result,

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[64] The outcome statements of The First Syrian Youth Conference where 150 students from different backgrounds and cities participated in 2018 in Damascus.
[65] The outcome statements of The First Syrian Youth Conference where 150 students from different backgrounds and cities participated in 2018 in Damascus.

the parents angrily complained that their children's work was not marked fairly compared to other students[66].

5.4 Students' Needs from Schools, Teachers, and Teaching Methods: Communicate to Address Their Psychological and Educational Necessities

Almost all students and the key figures of education staff stated that students do not receive emotional and psychological support bringing out the following arguments: however, it highlights that all the following needs can be managed with a skillful teaching team.

1- Psychological counseling for students is not efficiently active in addition to a lack of professional staff.

a.   Students do not receive emotional support as part of the educational process.

b.   Emotional support is an urgent necessity to address psychological trauma and vent negative feelings in positive ways

I.   Tendency to violence

II.   Normalising violence

III.   dropping out of school

2- Students provided some reasons and possible solutions for several problems:

a.   There is no initiative for activities that provide psychological support.

b.   There is not enough dialogue between school and students to understand students' needs and problems.

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[66]Interview with a Science teacher at the school case study in 2019, Damascus, Syria.

c. Students mostly are not part of decision making. Involving students in decisions related to school administration improves their well-being and consequently their academic performance.

d. The followed methods of punishment produce negative feelings and behaviours.

Due to these factors, in 2018 students came from all over the country to participate in the First Youth Conference and make their voices heard. They wanted to express their psychological and educational problems and needs, starting from the curriculum, and moving to mental health counseling arriving at their wish to be part of decision making. In this part, it is crystal clear that students have urgent needs with an "adverse impact on their ability to learn and on their emotional and psychological well-being" (UNICEF, 2015b: 22). Nevertheless, these needs with limited sources can be met with effective guidelines, studied strategies, and organized efforts by able and motivated educational staff. With a skillful academic team, the possibility of providing what is missing is enormous.

5.4.1 Psychological Support:

The psychological state of students is significantly important and one of the curriculum's standards. Unfortunately, students do not receive emotional support as part of the educational process. Having one hour of psychological counseling in the curriculum is a need to guide and help students to cope with the difficulties they have been through because of the crisis the country is undergoing. Students during the last decade have experienced plenty of emotional, social, and economic challenges. Therefore, they need a curriculum that "addresses the psychological trauma Syrian children have experienced as a result of the conflict… It is imperative that a comprehensive

and holistic programme of psychosocial education and support be provided to all Syrian children" (UNICEF, 2015b: 22).

Emotional support is an urgent necessity to vent their feelings in positive ways to avoid introversion, depression, or resorting to violence. I could not forget the words of the school principal, "The child is not the same". It is difficult to imagine how that conflict affects children. Children have witnessed a great deal of violence. Violence and blood are everywhere: from television, newspapers, and the Internet to family and friends' daily discussions. The photos of colorful worlds and cartoon movies have been replaced with images full of death and destruction. Children's songs have been replaced with the sounds of bombs and explosions.

All teachers interviewed concurred that the "tendency to violence" is the main challenge. Students have started using violence to solve their problems. One of the primary teachers for the first-grade students[67] noted that children have begun using their toys to play violent games. Their favorite toys are war toys, especially toy weapons that students use to hurt their friends. Children are developing the concept that violence is the standard answer to the violence of others. Many students have become sad, introverted, depressed, and withdrawn from their peers. All these emotions of grief, sadness, and depression drain their energy.

Doctor Rima Abdullah Zakaria, in a report on the Syrian Ministry of Education website, stated that many quarrels and violence between students are happening daily due to the amount of violence they have seen or gone through, in addition to the day-to-day difficulties in providing the basic life needs due to the 10-year crisis. The Director of Guidance at the Ministry of Education, al-Muthanna Khaddour, stated that parents and teachers complain about the violent and aggressive behaviour of some children. Mr. Khaddour explained "psychological and educational studies have

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[67] Interview through email with first grade teacher, Damascus, Syria, on 23 October 2015.

given great attention to this phenomenon, and demonstrated that the child's aggressive behaviour is learned from the environment he or she lives in. The child uses violence as a mechanism of self-defense and develops his/her method of action in solving difficult situations he or she faces". Mr. Khaddour said that, since the child does not own the needed life skills to make him or her feel safe among others, treatment can be through reducing aggressive models, giving images of role models or ideals such as parents and teachers, and training the child to control anger in frustrating situations. Mr. Khaddour added that "this is the role of the psychological and social counselor in schools" in cooperation with the parents for help (Abdullah Zakaria, 2019).

To dig deeper and gain a better understanding of the needs of children, it is important to know the psychological effects of the crisis on children. To obtain this information, a specialist in children's psychological therapy with 30 years of experience working in primary schools in Damascus was interviewed in 2015 and again in 2019. She has been working as a school psychological guidance teacher since 2002 and has been supervising an Orphanage Center since 2010. After more than a decade of the Syrian crisis, violence among students has become regular. It is expected that the effects of the crisis on children will become more acute in psychological and educational terms. We have a generation of children who do not know regular childhood games. Most of them have not even been in entertainment parks. Traditional games of running, jogging, and climbing have been replaced with new games full of crisis terms such as "run and I will shoot you dead", or "run and I will strike you with a cannon". Tension, anxiety, panic attacks, bedwetting, and insomnia have spread among children. Usually, children feel protected by their parents, but now they realise that no one can protect them. Now children are often worried, anxious, and depressed. The violence that children receive daily can easily be recognized at schools. Violence has become a trend. It has become a common situation at schools to answer

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violence with violence, use aggressive angry terms in conversations, and imitate scenes full of violence and blood. Cases of violence referred to by the school psychologist/counselor, from fighting to severe biting, have notably increased[68].

In a report by Save the Children, Sara, a 10-year-old girl who is in the fourth grade said, "*[When shelling takes place] I hide in the safest place and I open my mouth and close my ears so I won't hear the airstrikes and feel that there's nothing wrong*" (Save the Children, 2021, 2; italics in original). The normalization of violence is epitomized in a photo taken in August 2013 by a Reuters journalist in Rakka (eastern Syria). The photographer was able to take a picture of some children playing in an area without open fire at the time. The image shows a group of children playing in the street, imitating adults carrying a victim killed in the conflict, grieving for the loss, and walking on the street. Some of the children were imitating the faces of the adults' suffering and concern. Others are openly laughing at the game. The child who is acting as the dead person is smiling and enjoying being in the spotlight surrounded by his friends. The intention of this photo is quite obvious, yet it goes very deep.

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[68] Interview with a specialist in child psychology, Damascus, Syria on 20 June 2015, 2019.

Figure 40 Children Play: Carrying a Coffin[69]

One picture is worth a thousand words. One picture could be an honest witness of a nation's tragedy in the trail of history (Sontag, 2004). Photos are evidence of our success, failure, shame, happiness, achievement, and many other feelings. Images are snapshots of life; most of the time they record the reality and document nations' experiences. Photos are captured moments of life that leave solid marks in people's memories. The photographer's intention seems to be to show how children in Syria are normalizing the daily violence that they are suffering and that they even play and make fun of scenes that involve death and hard suffering. I contacted Nour Fourat[70] the photographer, asking for more information about the picture (Figure 40). He said he prefers these photos to those that show direct violence, explaining that these photos are more powerful and

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[69] Nour, Fourat (2013), *Children Play: Carrying a Coffin*, The international media agency Reuters, http://static5.businessinsider.com/image/520a8db8ecad045a28000007-1200/no-wonder-children-are-playing-by-staging-mock-funerals.jpg, 26 April 2022

[70] Interview through email with Mr. Nour Fourat (pseudonym), Damascus, Syria on 3 April 2014.

directly touch the heart. The photographer tries to offer unique and high-quality work to avoid the obvious images of violence. This picture is an ethical piece of journalism because the photo does not show violence but goes beyond it. It tries to raise awareness concerning the social impact of violence on children and society in Syria.

To further develop our understanding of how children visualize peace and war, a visit to a center of orphanages in Damascus was carried out where some teachers kindly had students draw how, in their opinion, Syria looks today and how they want it to be in future. This activity demonstrated the terrors the children had witnessed and the horrible experiences they went through. The vast effects on them cannot be solved with two nice words and a hug or a nice picnic or holiday or even moving to a safe place. It needs specialized tools, professional people, and a great deal of time and effort. How to convince two girls in the prime of their childhood (7 and 9 years old) to trust people again and believe that the future will be colorful after their father killed their mother in front of his three daughters and two sons under the pressure of the crisis? The reason for this tragedy is really beyond imagination (See photos 41, 42). The father is now in jail and the mother is in the graveyard and the girls and the boys are in the orphanage. The girls are still in the orphanage center to continue their education[71]. In the drawings, both girls embodied the crisis with a dead body, gun, and blood. In other children's drawings, some added sad comments like "Syria is burning" and "the brother is killing his brother".

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[71] Interview with orphanage center's supervisor in Damascus, Syria in 2015, 2019.
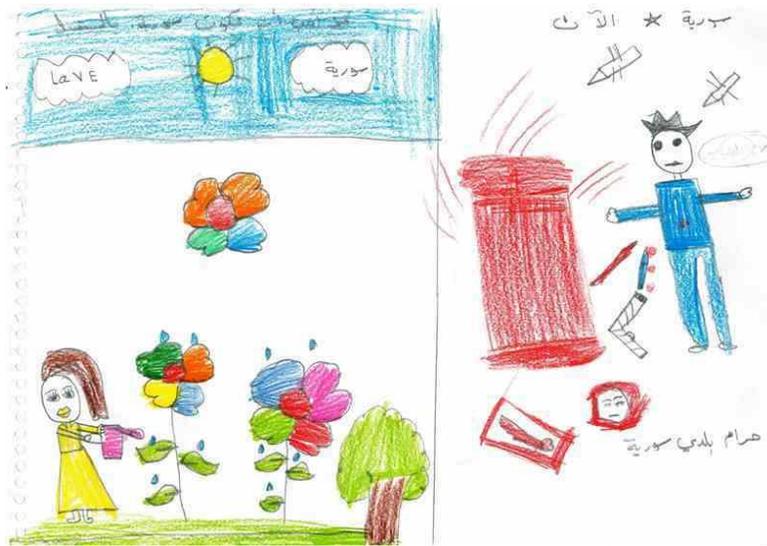
Figure 41 Children's Drawings[72]

Figure 42 Children's Drawings

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Figure 43 Children's Drawings[73]

Figure 44 Children's Drawings

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[73] Drawings Figures 43 to 48; Drawings of girls of age 6 to 11 years old in an Orphanage Center in Damascus, 2015.

Figure 45 Children's Drawings[74]

These photos represent hidden wishes inside the children. They do not ask for expensive toys or clothes. They do not want to visit fancy places or other countries. They only wish to be among their families in small houses and warm beds. They want to go to school and play with their friends with a ball and some colorful balloons in a nice garden in a safe place under the sky of their country.

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[74] Drawings Figures 43 to 48; Drawings of girls of age 6 to 11 years old in an Orphanage Center in Damascus, 2015.

Figure 46 Children's Drawings

Small wishes we used to take for granted. Their drawings are a strong silent voice screaming inside their spirits longing for a better future.

These drawings remind me of some lines from a song I read a long time ago. It says:

> Pray for Peace
> In the moments of the morn when the day is being born
> Pray for Peace
> When you're putting on your shoes and you hear the daily news
> Pray for Peace
> When you dance and sing and play, let the song within you say
> Pray for Peace
> When you're watching children run laughing freely in the sun

Figure 47 Children's Drawings

Pray for Peace

When you're starting up your car, take a moment where you are to

Pray for Peace

When the checkout line is long, keep your peaceful vision strong

Pray for Peace

When the traffic line is slow, breathe in peace and feel it flow

Figure 48 Children's Drawings

Pray for Peace

When you're sitting by the fire and flames are leaping higher

Pray for Peace

At the ending of the day when you meditate and pray

Pray for Peace

(UNESCO, 2005: 3)

Figure 49 Children's Drawings[75]

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[75] Figure 49 A drawing of a 6-year-old boy in an Orphanage Center in Damascus, 2015.

The specialist in children's psychology underlined that we have to realize the circumstances surrounding children to understand their needs. Effects and needs are like a chain; every reason leads to the other. She believes that children's small circle and their families are the starting point. Most Syrian families are hosting one or two families in their houses given the large number of displaced families and the lack of availability of empty houses in safe areas or for the extremely high rent, which has caused an incredible rise in prices. The house of the child becomes a crowded place where he or she does not receive much care or enjoy privacy and personal space or any kind of independence. Economic pressure plays another vital role in creating more family problems, which directly affect the child. Syrian society is a traditional family society where a big family is important. Meeting at least once a week with the grandparents and the rest of the family is essential. During the crisis, many children have lost the connection to their extended families. Besides that, many children suffer from the absence of one of their parents for different reasons.[76] With crowded houses and parents losing their jobs or the absence of one of the parents, the economic pressure becomes unbearable. The financial crisis has forced many children to enter the adult work field exposing themselves to many hazards, from health risks to the dangers of physical abuse. In short, today Syrian children are "grown-up men and women" who bear the financial burden among many other burdens with their families[77].

Many students have dropped out of school; some returned after one year or more, while others could not and are still waiting for better conditions. After 11 years of war, an economic crisis, and the pandemic of COVID-19, education has been brutally disrupted, with more than 2.4 million out of school (Qaddour & Husain, 2022: 7). One of the stories reported by the World Food Program was Issa´s story. Issa and his family are a living image of many other families. It has been

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[76] Interview with a specialist in children psychology, Damascus, Syria on 20 June 2015.
[77] Interview with a specialist in children psychology, Syria on 17 October 2021.

three years since 12-year-old Issa entered a classroom. He and his family were on the move since they had lost their house and all their belongings. Issa explained how it was challenging for him to stay away from school, "seeing other children going to school when I couldn't make me feel bitter, I would ask my parents to enroll me in school and they would say that we needed to settle down first". Education in Syria is free. However, many displaced students are at risk of never coming back to class due to the prolonged conflict and the economic situation. Many displaced families consumed their savings over years of displacement. Issa's father said, "we deprive ourselves of many things to keep the children in school". Issa is "such a caring person, despite his young age, he takes on many responsibilities to help us", the father said. Happily, Issa has just started his education after three long years out of school. He is now in the third grade resuming his education and is one of the best students in his class. He said "studying, being with my classmates and interacting with the teachers makes me very happy" (Al Saleh and Alqassab, 2021).

When children come back to school with a one or two-year gap, they create a significant burden on the schools. Teachers who face cases like that have to work on two levels. The first one is teaching the school curriculum to students according to the plan of the Ministry of Education, and the other is to try to cover the many educational gaps so that the returned students can catch up with the academic level of their peers[78]. The number of functioning schools has dramatically decreased; only one-third of schools in Syria are fully functional (Qaddour & Husain, 2022: 7). Even in safe areas, the number of functional schools has decreased. Some schools have been converted into shelters for displaced people (El Laithy, 2016), which has led to more pressure on the functioning schools and teachers who already have many problems.

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[78] Interview with a specialist in child psychology, Damascus, Syria on 20 June 2015.

5.4.2 Suggested Solutions:

Various approaches can be integrated as effective ways for students to express their feelings. Students agreed on many suggested solutions. Giving attention to art can be one of these solutions. Encouraging drawing, acting in school plays, playing music, and singing are powerful psychological tactics and strategies to release negative emotions. That can be carried out by organizing exhibitions, theatre plays, and concerts as part of school activities, at school or among schools.

Figure 50 Paintings Gallery[79]

Extracurricular activities can help children who have experienced trauma or war. They improve mental health, by promoting social skills, developing resilience and decreasing children's sense of isolation (European Commission, 2021: 3). Another idea, that the majority of the interviewees

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[79] Scouts of Syria (2019), *Paintings Gallery*,
https://www.facebook.com/Scout.of.Syria/photos/2433771426658125, last access 25 May, 2022.

wish to give a try, is reflection classes. Students can share their experiences and stories, and express their ideas, dreams, and fears. Moreover, they could gain social skills and problem-solving abilities by seeing the problem through their friends' eyes. Besides that, this kind of reflection could help children be more confident in sharing their feelings and talking about violence-related issues.[80]

School beautification is a crucial emotional support element to students' state of mind. It was one of the students' main requests. Working together with students to have a well-maintained school offers students a welcoming, safe atmosphere and an attractive environment for learning. The participation of students in maintaining the cleanliness and improving their schools' atmosphere gives them a sense of achievement. Organizing a school beautification day or cleaning day to refine the look of schools is a dynamic initiative that can be achieved through simple activities and ideas suggested by students themselves. This action brings the school and the community together. Parents and the community can contribute a little of their time during the school beautification day by initiating some reforms or actions that help make the school more aesthetically pleasing and practical. In addition, it provides various benefits such as a formative influence and inspiration and a positive effect on the students' behaviour and educational performance. It also increases the level of pride students feel toward their schools (Nicholas, 2004).

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[80] Interviews through email with various teachers from the school case study, Damascus, Syria, on 23 October 2014.

[81]Figure 51 The Experimental Garden in the Capital Damascus

The students recommended other activities and procedures that could provide plenty of benefits. Expectedly, teachers in the school case study and some parents recommended most of these suggestions. Creating a phone application allows students to download the curriculum. The Ministry of Education began applying this initiative in 2019. Including a subject in the curriculum about Ethics that consolidates values and morals was another suggestion. Moreover, breaks during

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[81] Scouts of Syria, (2018), *The Experimental Garden in the Capital Damascus*, Syria, https://www.facebook.com/Scout.of.Syria/photos/a.648635445171741/1845521992149741, 25 May 2022.

the lessons to energize students, such as telling a joke or jumping, prevent the use of a break time/playtime between classes to finish lessons. Furthermore, the students were interested in increasing extracurricular activities. Introducing teaching staff to methods more relevant to practical life, such as mental arithmetic and motor activities, would make students more engaged in their classes. Organising school trips is an effective method to strengthen the relationship between students. Extracurricular activities, including summer camp, work on consolidating the values in the curriculum. The summer camp brings together students from all segments of society trying to transform values into behaviours. The Scouts of Syria organized a similar initiative. The head of the Syrian Scouts, Mr. Elias Shahrour, said during the Youth Conference "The Scouts is a voluntary, non-political educational movement which is open to everyone without distinction of gender or age, and aims to help young people to ascend to their fullest creative, spiritual and social energies". He explained that "The Syrian Scouts works on the principle of development, developing a sense of volunteerism, developing personality, and developing society. It adopts an educational system that relies on experience and expertise in learning, and it is a non-curricular activity that complements the school classroom activity" (Shahrour, 2018)[82]. These initiatives need to be organized on a larger level and more frequently.

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[82] Shahrour, Elias (2018), "A Statement given by Mr. Shahrour", The First Youth Conference, Damascus, Syria.

[83]*Figure 52 Paintings Gallery2*

Adding to the above, students revealed their wishes to be part of the decision-making in their schools. They feel they are kept out of the decision circle where their needs are not listened to. Feeling left out and not heard eventually can lead to low performance and disorderly behaviour in the school. Involving students in school decisions develops communication and conflict resolution skills and a sense of responsibility. This goal could be realised through a representative of students on the school board, in addition to a weekly hour where students can present their ideas and needs. Organizing a suggestion box for students at school can serve this objective by giving the chance also to students who might feel insecure or afraid to share their suggestions. Forming a student council to represent students with periodic evaluation is another productive suggestion. This idea

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83Scouts of Syria (2019), *Paintings Gallery*, Scouts of Syria,
https://www.facebook.com/Scout.of.Syria/photos/2433781419990459, 25 May 2022.

provides students with tools to make their school a supportive, cooperative place and improve communication among school members. This will more likely motivate students to engage more at school and improve their performance[84]. "Students learn more when they are actively involved in decision making by their parents and teachers… It is therefore recommended that teachers should look for ways of involving students in decision making, when school rules are formulated" (Mati and others, 2016: 2303). It is the role of the teaching team to create opportunities for students to communicate their needs and point of views.

Methods of discipline are another point students want to communicate about due to their negative psychological and physical effects. All students asserted the necessity to find alternatives to discipline methods and a balance between reward and punishment. In 1986, the Syrian Ministry of Education distributed a memorandum stating that the use of beating, or any other harmful methods of discipline is not permitted, regardless of the justifications. Then in 1988, the Ministry issued a decision that declared that the punishment of beating is prohibited, irrespective of the reasons (Al-Bashir, 2018). Later, in 2018, an official decision was issued to emphasise that hitting students, regardless of their age, is strictly forbidden in all schools. In case of violations, penalties will be imposed (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2018). Nevertheless, some teachers continue to use beatings as a method of punishment.

Possible reasons for this behaviour could be that "many teachers cannot control their temper in dealing with students in the classroom, and they resort to beating ... and verbal insulting", according to one teacher (Al-Bashir, 2018). Students affirmed that this kind of punishment severely affects students and leads them to drop out of school in several cases. Students suggested various alternative approaches for constrictive outcome punishments/disciplines. The purpose of

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[84] The outcome statements of The First Syrian Youth Conference where 150 students from different backgrounds and cities participated in 2018, Damascus.

punishment is to change a student's behaviour. Therefore, an initial warning can be provided first instead of applying the punishment directly. This allows students to perform the required changes to avoid punishments. Abolition of punishment can be in this way a form of reward. Discipline methods that develop students' skills could be used instead. Some of these include writing articles or organizing/participating in school competitions in different fields at school, region, or country levels. Understandably, teachers are under a great deal of daily pressure and financial burden. Giving teachers proper training to practice and master the tools of education for peace might provide a solid helping hand to teachers in the daily challenges before the ones in classrooms.

5.5 Teacher Performance:

This part of the research looks for possible reasons for many teachers' unsatisfactory teaching performance. It starts with studying the criteria of teachers' requirements in the Syrian curriculum. Then, it explores the quality and the availability of teachers' training courses. It examines teachers' guidance books and underlines the gap between the theories and their application. Finally, it discusses possible solutions in the Syrian context.

"Good-quality education is not possible without the presence of able and motivated teachers" (UNICEF, 2015b: 22). Earlier it was clarified that the elements and the aims of the Syrian curriculum harmonize with the components of Education for Peace. But what are the standards related to teachers' qualifications and preparations? The Ministry of Education provided the needed information. It was demonstrated in the Ministry's decisions regarding the general educational goals and the future vision of pre-university education in the Syrian curriculum. According to the Ministry, the curriculum should be run and managed by a qualified administration, which (1) adopts effective mechanisms to develop the methods of teaching and

learning, (2) learns from successful international experiences, (3) depends on expert superior human resources, and finally (4) invests the appropriate techniques (Al-Wezz, 2015: 2).

Remarkably, the theoretical part is well established and organised, and it aligns with the goals of education for peace. That brings about the second part of the question specifically, are these theories put into practice? In other words, what are the practical implementation strategies employed to achieve the desired outcomes? To have answers and a better understanding of the process, I attended training programs carried out by the school in the study during the school summer holidays of 2015, 2018, and 2019. Secondly, I conducted interviews focused on teachers' guides. I repeated the same questions to curriculum specialists and committee members.

Usually, the school organises a teacher-training course twice a week during the school holiday. Throughout the course, teachers exchange experiences, methods of teaching, and constructive criticism, from their perspectives and expertise. The primary purposes of this course are, firstly, to improve the teaching methods of the current teachers and to train/ choose new teachers for the coming years. Every teacher has to prepare a lesson to be evaluated by the other attending teachers during the training. Participating in this course allowed me to observe how the Syrian curriculum is being implemented at a practical level.

There were three candidates for an open teaching position in one class I attended. Each candidate prepared a lesson to perform in the presence of the principal and other teachers. The first teacher gave an Arabic lesson for the fourth grade. She wrote a few examples on the whiteboard and asked other teachers to provide her with other examples for the past tense verb. Some of the examples that were given reflect the effect of the crisis on our language. Of all the verbs that exist in the Arabic language, they chose verbs related to violence, some of which were "fought", "destroyed" and "hit". None of the teachers had even noticed this issue. The second point that

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drew my attention was that the teacher did not give any affective aims or focus on any peace values.

After finishing the class, teachers provided feedback to evaluate the teacher's performance. I asked why the teacher did not use any tools to support affective aims. Her answer was "I prefer to give affective values during special classes, not during every class". It was not clear to the teachers how to integrate the affective values and the educational messages through simple techniques in their lessons. Some possible ways to do this could be asking students to give verbs that refer to peace, cooperation, respect, and love instead of using examples referring to violence. Verbs can be found in a text given by the teacher that include the values of Education for Peace. Teachers' choices of provided activities and examples play a crucial role in students' construction of knowledge. Consequently, students would subconsciously absorb the concepts of Education of Peace. Small steps and effective tools are what is needed for a good start. At the beginning the teachers were apprehensive, but later with some introductory explanation about Education for Peace, their attitude changed to be very interested to the point that they asked for a training course to understand the methods and practice the tools.

Another class I attended was for a teacher with fourteen years of experience in teaching Mathematics to elementary and secondary grades in many schools in Damascus. She was very confident to the degree that she informed the principal that she did not need to prepare any particular lesson, as she was ready to give any lesson from any grade the principal wanted. The discussion ended up with a lesson from the fourth grade. The performance was significantly below average. It was a big disappointment and a good example of the banking system. The banking system is a system that prevents skills development, student engagement and creativity. The Banking Concept of Education as Paulo Freire described it in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is a

system where "the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly;". In this system, the world is seen as "static" where nothing changes and people need to adapt and fit in. It only allows students to extend "as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits… But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge" (Freire, 1970: 32, 72, 73). When the principal and the rest of the specialized staff gave the mathematics teacher constructive feedback, she asked for a second chance. To my surprise, the same teacher presented the following week again, but the performance was not the same. She made impressive progress by using all the constructive comments she received.

I also attended other performances in 2018 and 2019, but the performances were more or less similar to the above two examples. However, in 2019 there were noticeable improvements in the used methods for some teachers. The old banking desk education system was present in several classes with some exceptions. However, some of the teachers could not make the best of the feedback, and others with a long teaching career did not like the feedback or did not understand the points directed to them. It should be recalled that the developed curriculum in 2018 depends on activities and creativity to locate the required information. This kind of change requires more preparation making the job harder for some teachers, especially without proper guidance. This highlights that with good guidance and explanation we can have notable improvements. This point raised many questions. It could be understandable to some degree to have a poor performance with newly graduated teachers, but what about the teachers with a long teaching career? In addition to that, the Minister of Education publishes teacher's guides to give teachers directions and guidelines to follow in the classroom. The next step was to examine the teachers' guide and the quality of the training courses conducted for teachers.

5.5.1 Difficulties in the Teachers' Guide and the Curriculum:

I checked teachers' school preparation notebooks. The general aims for any class were the same as the cognitive aims in a first-grade teacher's preparation notebook. I wondered whether this was how the preparation notebook should be filled or if the teacher did not know the difference. Similar issues were found in some other teachers' preparation notebooks. Given this observation, investigating teacher's guides was the next step. I went through teacher's guides of different school grades. They looked well written and organized.

The instructions for teaching methods harmonize with the problem-posing teaching system. For example, on page 9 of the teachers' guide for Arabic in the first grade, it is mentioned that students should have the thinking skills of brainstorming and meditative thinking, predicting, discovering, differentiating, reading pictures, searching, decision-making, and problem-solving. In the same guide, on page 12, there is an emphasis on the communication skills for students to express their opinions. Moreover, on page 15, the guide encourages having conversations between teacher-student, student-student, and in groups. The exact page mentions the speaking skills, oral expression, and techniques for open-ended discussions. These techniques give students free spaces to choose any topic from their lives (Baghdadi and others, 2010: 9, 12, 15). Furthermore, several engaging activities are available, although there are not many given examples of the mechanism for using these activities on different topics. An Arabic teacher in the school believed that the instructions and examples are insufficient to demonstrate the needed tools to control and handle such activities. In addition to that, these instructions are not available in the curriculum[85]. I asked the teachers[86] of different subjects and grades whether the provided instructions in the teachers'

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[85] Interview with Arabic teacher at the school in study in 2018, Damascus, Syria.
[86] Interview with teachers of different grades and subjects at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, in 2015, 2018, 2019.

guides are sufficient to deliver the information in the curriculum. The answers which were obtained were diverse.

Figure 53 Teacher's Guide[87]

All the teachers agreed that both the curriculum and the guide have many advantages and disadvantages. The curriculum is good. Affective aims are clear in some lessons, such as problem-solving and decision-making. For example, in the "My Food" lesson in the first grade, students have to decide which food is good for them and which is not. Similarly, in the fourth grade in the Social Studies subject, there is a good emphasis on some values like the importance of protecting the ruins in Syria.[88]Furthermore, most of them agreed that the instructions in teachers' guides are clear. This information is helpful in organizing teachers' ideas and providing new ways of teaching such as giving lessons by asking questions. Some lessons are partially or fully explained with

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[87]Teacher's Guide, Damascus, Syria, 2015.
[88] Interview with a teacher of Social and Christian Religion Studies (number 1) at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, on 7 July 2015.

information on how to apply them in class. However, various teachers said that the affective aims are clear in some lessons, but they are not in many other lessons. For example, a fourth-grade teacher thought that "affective aims are shallow in the curriculum"[89]. Another teacher highlighted an important point saying that "identifying and teaching the values depends on teachers' experience and their effort"[90]. Teachers shared that the guide is not enough for teachers without experience as it needs more clarification. A Science teacher[91] noted that some of the instructions need more examples. The first time she read the guide, she understood all the information but did not know how to apply the instructions in all the lessons. In teachers' guides, only a few selected lessons are explained. She said "It is difficult for teachers, especially the ones without experience, to know how to apply these new tools in other lessons. Illustrations with examples help teachers to understand the mechanism of the theoretical part and how to put it in use". [92] Learning through examples will demonstrate how to integrate concepts and use tools of Education for Peace such as critical or contemplative thinking in all lessons. Another issue was that teachers' guides have not always been updated to be in line with the curriculum. There is a period of time around a year for some subjects and more for others which caused confusion and difficulties in dealing with the curriculum[93].

Religious and Social Education teacher (number 2) said that "Teachers' guide still contains a comprehensive and clear explanation of the lesson's characteristics as in the subjects of Religious Education and Social Education".[94] Another teacher teaching the Arabic subject advised that

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[89] Interview with a fourth-grade teacher at the school case study, Damascus, Syria on 7 July 2015.
[90] Interview with an Arabic teacher (number 2), at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, in 2019.
[91] Interview with a Science Teacher (number 3) at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, on 7 July, 2019.
[92] Interview with a Science Teacher (number 3) at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, on 7 July, 2019.
[93] Interview with teachers of different grades and subjects at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, in 2015, 2018, 2019.
[94] Interview with Religious Education and Social Education teacher (number 2) at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, 2019.

"Teachers' guide is good, however, there are some subjects that do not have instructions for every single class such as in the Arabic language. Only one model for the first unit was given, and the teacher needs to measure the rest of the lessons according to this model. In my opinion, this is the reason for the difficulties in preparing lessons for new teachers".[95] A fourth-grade teacher was under the impression that giving teachers models to follow causes stereotyping. She explained that "the practical part in the fourth grade is given in one template which prevents any flexibility".[96] Additionally, many teachers who have a lot of experience in teaching are not convinced by the new strategies provided by the teachers' guide and they prefer their old methods.[97]

Several teachers are struggling with both the curriculum and the guide. One of the major reasons is based on the new methods of investigation where the curriculum does not include all the answers. They cannot keep classes in order during the activities of investigating to obtain information and results, which leads to feelings of boredom among students. Furthermore, according to some teachers' part of the information base is more advanced than the current level of the students, especially for some dropout students. In these cases, teachers have to find the missing information from different sources. This increases the teaching load, and consumes time and effort, especially considering that the curriculum is already very intensive with a massive amount of information and activities[98].

"The timetable of classes' distribution in the teacher's guide does not fit the amount of information required in every lesson". Some lessons are supposed to be taught in one class, but in

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[95] Interview with Arabic teacher at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, 2019.

[96] Interview with a fourth grade teacher at the school case study, Damascus, Syria on 7 July 2015.

[97] Interview with Social and Christian Religion Studies teacher at the school case study, Damascus, Syria on 7 July 2015.

[98] Some of the interviews with teachers of different grades and subjects; English teachers, French teacher, Arabic teacher, Social Studies teacher, Math and Science teacher, Information and Communication Technology teacher, first grade teacher, second grade teacher, third grade teacher and fourth grade teacher, at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, in 2019.

reality, they need two or three classes, "especially keeping in mind the different educational levels of students".[99] Based on that, there is not enough time left to apply the techniques and the tools that are mentioned in the teacher's guide to apply the elements of Education for Peace. For that reason, "the timetable should be organized in a way that considers even the time needed by students to copy the information from the board to their notebooks".[100] It is very hard for teachers to deal with the curriculum and the tools at the same time. A first-grade teacher explained that when it was decided to integrate these techniques into the curriculum, it was expected that the school day would be extended until 3:30 pm. Therefore, many teachers only take from the guide what they need without going deeper. Moreover, a good number of these techniques and strategies need computers and projector screens, which are not provided in many schools due to the crisis.[101] As the main concern becomes finishing and finding ways to explain and simplify the cognitive part, not much attention is given to the affective part.

Unfortunately, teachers do not realise that these kinds of activities may save them time. "Teachers may spend less time teaching with examples and encouraging experiential learning within their discipline, which is where the real learning often takes place" (Alford and Griffin, 2019). The biggest challenge for teachers is choosing the most effective and related techniques to their lessons and affective values. The first-grade teacher (number 2) gave a good example supporting this argument. The value of one of her lessons was urging students to keep their city clean, starting from their school, street, neighborhood. The teacher started the lesson by cleaning her table and throwing papers that were on the floor into the wastepaper basket. Automatically all

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[99] Interview with Math and Science teacher, at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, on 7 July 2018.
[100] Interview with Social Studies and Christian Religion Teacher at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, on 7 July 2018.
[101] Interview with a first grade teacher at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, on 7 July 2015.

students started imitating her action. "Taking on these kinds of methods helps to convey the information to all students and make the best of the time by employing children's energy in activities, instead of provoking riots in the classroom, especially in classes with large numbers" the teacher added[102]. The first-grade teacher (number 2) was a case in point. She does not like teaching numbers through questions as mentioned in the guide but rather prefers teaching numbers through stories which makes her class more interesting and efficient.[103] She is an example of a teacher who can be more creative in finding more motivational tools than the ones mentioned in the teachers' guide, to deliver information.

"This practice has a tendency to make our teaching more relevant, more relatable, and more understandable to the students.

> While preparing and teaching, it is important to keep our focus on the big picture. When it comes to incorporating examples into our teaching, we should frequently ask ourselves questions associated with what, how, and when, such as:
>
> - What examples and illustrations would help students better understand?
> - How should those examples or illustrations be delivered?
> - When could those examples and illustrations be used most effectively?
>
> Integrating meaningful learning examples into our courses should take place at all levels of our teaching.
>
> (Alford and Griffin, 2019).

5.5.2 Training Courses:

Along these lines, teachers have formed two opinions regarding the teachers' guide. Some of them believe that the teachers' guides are good and flexible. On the other hand, other teachers believe that teachers' guides need more instructions to build all lesson plans. To understand the reasons for differences in teachers' viewpoints, some of the above questions were redirected to

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[102] Interview with First grade teacher, at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, 2019.
[103] Interview with First grade teacher (number 2), at the school case study, Damascus, Syria on 7 July 2015.

one of the curriculum committee members and co-authors. The main question was about the process of teachers' training. How is it prepared and organized? The Member provided the detailed procedure of this process as follows:

1- "Since 2019, the Ministry of Education has established teachers' training courses every year for public and private school teachers.

2- The course is from one to three weeks during the summer months from 9 in the morning until 1.30 in the afternoon.

3- There are around 30 to 40 teachers in every course.

4- Attendance is obligatory.

5- The courses offer the basic information that draws the essential map for teachers to follow.

6- After the developed curriculum, the training could not involve all the teachers of the country, however,

   a. The Ministry of Education made sure to include at least one teacher from each school in the training course. In this way, these teachers can deliver the knowledge they obtained from the training to other teachers at school.

   b. Monthly visits from the Ministry's specialized school supervisors to give guidance.

7- Regarding the offered course training in the countryside, the courses are provided if the surrounding circumstances allow and in case of the availability of schools and teaching teams.

8- One or more instructors lead the courses"[104].

These points shed some light on the nature and the process of training courses, even though it is debatable if only one intensive course every year is enough to prepare new teachers and change

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[104] Interview with one of the curriculum committee members and co-authors, Damascus, Syria in 2019.

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the old teaching banking style for experienced teachers. Trainers need to be very qualified to deliver all these different kinds of innovative methods, tools, and activities in such a short time. For this purpose, the qualifications and the methods of trainers were/are of the greatest importance. The system of training was designed to be similar to a chain where every step depends on and supports the one before and the one after. The member explained that:

1- "The chain starts with the leading trainers; the authors and co-authors of the curricula.

2- The authors and co-authors of the curricula are the central trainers. When the curricula changed, they provided training courses to around 50 to 200 teachers of each subject from all over the country. The chosen teachers, which was around 2000 teachers, were some of the best teachers in their school according to the Ministry's specialized school supervisors.

3- The teachers were given a three-month course in 2018.

4- Once the three-month training was completed, the trained teachers were responsible for training the teachers in their schools, supervising, and applying the implementation of the educational process.

5- Every year the central trainers make formal annual visits to the cities all over the country to follow up on the onsite courses"[105].

The chain circle that may need more attention is the newly trained teachers who have to train other teachers after a short training period. To follow up on this information, teachers were asked about the feasibility and efficacy of these courses. The feedback was diverse. First, the training course included a large number of teachers in one class. Many thought that the training course did not precisely help teachers overcome their fears, doubts, and confusion regarding the

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[105] Interview with one of the curriculum committee members and co-authors, Damascus, Syria in 2019.

new methods and techniques or shed enough light on the new tools. Most of the trainers did not have experience using these tools. There were teachers of different school grades in the same course. The information was very general about the mechanism of the new tools. That made teachers feel uncertain about how to utilize these tools on all school levels[106]. For example, the teachers of first grade did not understand how to apply the examples given from the fifth grade to their students. A second-grade teacher with 16 years of teaching experience in primary school, expressed her dissatisfaction by asking:

> Why am I taking general information for all levels and I am a second-grade teacher? I need specialized information that makes me special in my field. I am seeking uniqueness and success. I do not want to know about everything, especially if I can get this additional information through my personal efforts.[107]

Moreover, one of the teachers was surprised that sometimes teachers of preparatory schools were training teachers of elementary schools, arguing that "dealing with primary students requires different approaches"[108]. Regarding this point, in theory, any teacher who obtains certification in teachers' training is qualified to give a training regardless of the grade they are teaching[109]. In addition to the courses organized by the Ministry of Education, there are many courses for Training of Trainers T.O.T available in the country. Some courses are onsite, and others are online (figure 54). Several training centers are accredited, such as 'Syrian Center for Training and Coaching S.T.C.C' (S.T.C.C, 2022). Various courses are organized by private institutes. In general, these courses are expensive and not affordable for all teachers. At the same time, several NGOs offer free-of-charge courses or with symbolic fees. Other courses are organized with cooperation and

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[106] Interviews with teachers from different grades and subjects in the primary school case study, in Damascus, Syria in 2019.
[107] Interview with a second-grade teacher in the school case study, Damascus, Syria on 5 July 2019.
[108] Interview with a first-grade teacher in the school case study in Damascus, Syria on 5 July 2019
[109] Interview with a Curriculum Committee Member and a co-authors, Damascus, Syria in 2019.

coordination between the Ministry of Education and international organizations, and in coordination with the local community. A good example of that is the cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Finnish Relief Organization (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2022c).

Figure 54 Online T.O.T Courses [110]

However, other teachers had a good experience during this training course. A Math and Science teacher explained that "this training course was of great use" for her. After attending this course, she could perfectly comprehend the strategies and the requirements mentioned in the guides. The training was an open-minded experience for her because she had the opportunity to widen her vision with new techniques and perspectives. Now in return, she is trying to spread her newly gained perspective to other teachers[111]. "The course was beneficial; nevertheless, a big

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[110] Shalish, Ahmad (2018), "Training of Trainers TOT", Online Academy, https://www.facebook.com/Jobs1Jobs/photos/%D8%A3%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-training-of-trainers-%D9%8A%D8%B5%D8%A8%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7/256393874929740/, 24 May 2022.

[111] Interview with a Math and Science teacher at the school case study, Damascus, Syria on 29 June 2019.

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number of teachers do not have enough time to put efforts in presenting certain tools… or …to attend the entire course"[112] due to many reasons such as having other jobs. The Ministry of Education organised the course she attended with the cooperation of the Finnish Relief Organization. The trainers had three days to review the basic information before starting the course from nine in the morning to four in the afternoon. "There are good ideas mentioned briefly in the curriculum. It is entirely subject to the teacher's methods to present the idea appropriately in a way that suits students and their local community". This includes ideas like discussing the benefits and risks of social media and "educating children to refuse any food or sweets offered to them by strangers"113.

Another English teacher (number 2) talked about her experience. She had a good experience with some reservations. A few points need to be considered. "Numbers of professors do not adhere with the course and there is not enough follow up. The quality of the course depends on the trainers of the course". Subsequently, some courses are good, and others were below average. Regarding the argument about multiple correct answers for some questions, in her opinion they "prevent the method of memorizing and learning by heart. The teacher should be a facilitator, not an instructor"[114].

5.5.3 Discussion of Teachers' Doubts:

Several teachers could not undersand the purpose and the target of the courses or could not understand the layout or the design of the syllabus. To better understand the opinions mentioned above, several teachers' comments were shared with a Curriculum Committee Member (number

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[112] Interview with English teacher (number 2), in the school case study, Damascus, Syria in 2018.
[113] Interview with English teacher in the school case study, Damascus, Syria in July 2019.
[114] Interview with English teacher (number 2) in the school case study in Damascus, Syria in July 2019.

2) for more feedback. For the argument that teachers' guides do not include a class plan or a model for every lesson in the curricula, he explained that the main goal of the curricula is to move away from stereotypes and give space for teachers and students to be creative and work together. Furthermore, the guide motivates teachers, with students' collaboration, to find and invent new teaching aids inspired by the current situation and the surrounding areas. Therefore, it is logical not to include a plan or a specific template.

> The modern curriculum aims to drive teachers and students to find new ways in investigating and carrying out activities. Teachers have to work on developing themselves and searching for innovative ways to give the lesson, using ideas from the surrounding reality and including students and their suggestions in the educational process. [115]

He insisted that teachers' guides aim to equip teachers with skills. The guide does not explain each lesson "but rather, it provides teachers with the necessary tools and one example to illustrate the teaching technique. Creativity is expected from teachers in finding/ using teaching methods to extract students' skills."[116]

Regarding the issue of having "questions with several potential answers",[117] teachers do not understand the rationale of these methods. The curriculum committee member (number 2) demonstrates that these questions create a space for creativity and "serve the creative process and logical thinking". This approach expands students' perspectives and comprehension by being part of the educational process. For instance (Table 1):

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[115] Interview with a Curriculum Committee Member (number 2), Damascus, Syria in 2019.
[116] Interview with a Curriculum Committee Member (number 2), Damascus, Syria in 2019.
[117] Interviews with first and second grade teachers at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, 7 July 2018.

If I were in the place of:	My behaviour would be:
Teacher	
Seller	
Judge	
Farmer	

Table 1 Creative Questions

This kind of question in the exam is an asset, especially if it is not highly graded (2 marks) out of (600) the final mark. "This question distinguishes the creative student" who works hard to improve their skills. This question is considered an excellent way to distinguish creative students and motivate them by an innovative teacher. However, the same question by "a stereotype teacher is considered an out of the curricula question".[118]

Regarding the comments that teachers' guides do not highlight the values of the lessons, the Member explained, "for every subject, there is a general standard". The general standard was divided into two parts. Firstly, "every unit has a holistic general value. Then, there is a partial value/ aim for every lesson in the unit, which is performance indicators".[119] One of the English teachers said that[120] giving a good lesson requires good preparation for this lesson. "The standards for giving a lesson and the performance indicators are very detailed and precise. Teachers have to

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[118] Interview with a Curriculum Committee Member (number 2), Damascus, Syria, 2019.
[119] Interview with a Curriculum Committee Member (number 2), Damascus, Syria in 2019.
[120] Interview with English teacher (number2), at the school case study in 2019, Damascus, Syria.

master the performance indicators to be able to prepare a lesson and the only way for that is through good training" [121]. The Member confirmed by saying that most of the work has to be done by the teacher. "They have to take the initiative and not wait for detailed guidance from the Ministry". If the teachers are not willing to work hard, any course will not be helpful to them. "It is true that part of the training courses provides general information about the techniques because every teacher has to find the suitable tools to apply these techniques. After the courses, some teachers did and are still doing amazing work with great results"[122].

5.6 Tools for Teachers' Training and Development: In the Syrian Context:

Minister of Education Dr. Darm Tabbaa pointed out that the Ministry of Education has accomplished "a plan to develop education within the next three years with the possibility of amending it every six months", indicating that the education process is at an acceptable level within the available capabilities, "but the reality requires concerted efforts to rebuild the destroyed schools, and to secure the requirements of the educational process" (Syrian Ministry of Education, 2022c).

An education specialist[123] was interviewed regarding the above argument. "Poor application of the educational process does not mean poor curricula but is related to several factors," he stated. "The lack of implementation of the new methods is due to some defects and obstacles within the educational process". [124] Some teachers are not eager to put effort into preparing classes and they prefer ready-made detailed explanations for lessons. Many of these teachers are from the old teaching methods generation and are convinced of their traditional ways.

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[121] Interview with English teacher (number2), at the school case study in 2019, Damascus, Syria.
[122] Interview with a Curriculum Committee Member (number 2), Damascus, Syria in 2019.
[123] Interview with a Ph.D. Education specialist in Education, Damascus, Syria in 2019.
[124] Interview with a Ph.D. Education specialist in Education, Damascus, Syria in 2019.

"Others aren't motivated enough to put in the effort, read the teacher's guide, and work to implement the standards". [125] This varies from one person to another because it depends mainly on individual differences and "it is related to the characteristics of people and the circumstances surrounding them". At the same time, it is essential to consider that teachers live under many psychological pressures for various reasons, "including economic pressure and the migration of family members, including spouses and children". Life during the crisis becomes more challenging.

The Ministry of Education and school administrations can apply procedures to spark the flame of enthusiasm. A combination of a good salary and expressing appreciation can be suitable forms of motivation. Some public and private schools take this approach. An English teacher at the school case study indicated that moral encouragement could be a good motivation. For instance, in some schools, there are ongoing competitions between classes, and the teacher of the winning class is honored by providing her or him with a note expressing gratitude in front of the school. In the past, the winning class and their teacher went on a trip at the school's expense. She added, unfortunately, moral motivation is not always enough if the economic situation of the teacher is not good.[126] To a large degree, this point mainly depends on individuals and their personality characteristics; however, teachers who spend all their day after school giving private lessons to afford their living expenses can be emotionally and physically exhausted.

Security of public school jobs is a good advantage that makes teachers willing to stay permanently in their careers. But when teaching becomes a daily routine without any motivation or competition with the same salaries, enthusiasm and motivation decrease. There is always competition among teachers in private schools, which increases the inspiration in developing the

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[125] Interview with a Ph.D. Education specialist in Damascus, Syria in 2019.
[126] Interview with English teacher (number 1) at the school case study, Damascus, Syria, on 29 June 2015.

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educational standard for both students and teachers. The competitions among private schools push some management to provide their teachers and students with the tools ranging from training courses to raises in salaries. Teachers realise that their good and up-to-date performances are necessary to keep their jobs.

Nevertheless, teachers should be aware of the country's crucial time, including the economic challenges after the crisis and the importance of their roles. The responsibility of teachers towards a whole generation should be a motivation in itself for teachers to find creative tools to help students cope with the current situation. One of the English Teachers observed at the beginning of the year that her students from the first grade are sad, depressed, quiet, and they rarely smile. She created a rule called "smile or there is no prize" in the class. Prizes and extra marks are for smiles, not for correct answers. To win the prize you need to say the correct answer with a smile; no smile, no prize[127].

Helping students to express their feelings is an essential step to let them vent their feelings of sadness and despair. Some teachers suggested giving students some time for self-reflection at the end of the day. During this time, students can share with other students anything they want under the supervision and guidance of their teacher. They can share funny or sad stories that happened to them or someone else. They can share their feelings, problems, hopes, dreams, and fears or stay silent while listening to others. Self-reflection time helps students to let out their feelings and strengthens the bonds with other students. Self-reflection time through sharing hopes, expectations, and fears regarding themselves, their family, and their country, helps to develop positive thinking and positive attitudes towards their present and future.

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[127] Interview with English teacher at school case study, Damascus, Syria, on 29 June 2015.

Unfortunately, not all trainers are entirely qualified to train other teachers, especially on the practical side. Besides, the follow-up on teachers' training at schools is not sufficient[128]. The specialist suggested several solutions that can make a difference in the educational process. Challenges faced by teachers should be considered and prioritized. This includes reasonable salaries and incentives for good teachers. "It is difficult for an exhausted teacher who is giving private classes all day after school seeking another source of income to work on suitable class aids and give his or her class all their energy and support".[129] Furthermore, it is important to include teachers in the decision of distributing the schedule of classes and hours, and "encourage teachers to be involved in the educational process. This will encourage the new generation to join the teaching family and become teachers." Finally, it is crucial to provide psychological support to teachers, which can be applied through courses or school specialists.[130] Some NGOs have initiated some training courses to provide psychological support to teachers. A good example is Save the Children and the IRC which have "integrated life skills and psychosocial support for teachers in their foundational teacher training". They started this training package in 2014 "to produce a standardized (across NGOs) training package for teachers" (UNICEF, 2015b: 33).

Regarding the training process, some steps need to be considered. Firstly, make training practical more than theoretical. It is essential to "re-evaluate the teacher periodically and intensify the visits of the material supervisor" who is delegated by the Ministry to follow up on the implementation of the educational process in the classroom and coordinate more meetings with teachers. It is recommended to make it a "weekly visit if possible". Intensifying the training courses for teachers and "making them periodic continuously". "It is preferable to distribute the

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[128] Interview with a Ph.D. specialist in Education, Damascus, Syria in 2019.
[129] Interview with Arabic teacher in school case study, Damascus, Syria in 2019.
[130] Interview with a Ph.D. specialist in Education, Damascus, Syria in 2019.

courses throughout the year" and not only during the summer holiday. By applying that, teachers will be in continuous contact with supervisors and trainers and help reduce the number of trainees from teachers in the classroom[131]. A practical solution could be adding a subject of teaching skills at university. School curricula need high skills in dialogue and class control during discussions. It is difficult to achieve this goal without a skilled teacher who is able to manage the dialogue while maintaining calm, discipline, and respect for others, to reach the desired goal of the lesson[132].

With regard to teaching aids, it is essential to activate and support the teaching aids manufacturing departments. This includes giving teachers financial incentives to manufacture teaching aids, and establishing an annual exhibition of educational aids made by students at many levels (school, city, country) to encourage the spirit of competition.

5.6.1 Syrian Initiative for Education for Peace Tools:

Positive thinking and positive attitudes are potent tools in Education for Peace. A positive and a negative perspective are a state of mind. A negative perspective is very distressing while a positive perception can lead to establish "harmonious" relationships with others and support individuals in facing life's challenges (UNESCO, 2001: 64). Helping students to adopt positive thoughts through presenting and explaining positive ideas such as "every person is good at heart, trust begets trust, today I choose to be happy, with each day I become stronger" (UNESCO, 2001: 65), conflict does not become a dead-end, but rather an opportunity to find another door to open. Telling stories about great women and men and their achievements can be an excellent inspiration for positive thinking and attitudes. Some comments from teachers can also play an important role in this point. For example, instead of marking some homework full of mistakes as "very poor" it

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[131] Interview with a Ph.D. specialist in Education, Damascus, Syria in 2019.
[132] Interview with the school principal, Damascus, Syria in 2018.

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could be marked as "your effort is admired," and replacing "you are weak" with "I am sure you can catch up with this subject easily" (UNESCO, 2001: 65, 69). It is essential to explain that having a positive perspective on a painful experience does not mean I accept it and will not do anything about it (UNESCO, 2001: 65, 69).

The question remains whether teachers have the time to organize these activities. The investigation found many spaces for development. There is some space for the teaching staff to enrich the classroom experience as they see fit. However, not all teachers have the skills to use this opportunity. Every teacher has a space to expand on the subject to connect the lesson with recent events. Nevertheless, the expansion should be related to the lesson depending on the criteria set out in the teacher guide, not at the expense of the lesson time.

Furthermore, according to a School Supervisors' Guide (number 2), working in the Department of Education, every teacher has two classes every month during which she or he can do any activities she or he wants. The social and psychological guidance counselors have a class every month. Classes could be given outside the classroom, but they need to occur inside the school under the supervision of the school principal. For instance, to make a science class more effective, the teacher can take students to the school garden for a practical lesson about plants and saving the environment. Depending on the Ministry's guide, the teachers can give lessons related to any issues they believe are important for students[133].

A few teachers and social guides have started some activities to face the growing needs and demands for guidance among students. Some guides are doing joint activities such as plays with meaningful scripts. Others are giving short lessons in a story format to educate students on some values. Others are making wall panels full of values, inspiring stories, pictures and proverbs.

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[133] Interview by phone with (Anonymous) School Supervisors' Guide (number 2) at the Department of Education under the Ministry of Education, Damascus, Syria on 13 June 2015.

Others ask their students to prepare and give a small part of the lesson to the class. This activity develops students' confidence and their sense of responsibility among many other positive personal skills[134]. Another activity that caught my attention was the directed behaviour cards (Tables 2, 3). The idea is very simple but at the same time very powerful. It increases self-awareness and respect for others. These cards are a way to encourage students to exchange knowledge, offer help to others and ask for personal help from classmates or from the school counselor[135].

My Plan for Help: The friend I want to help/ encourage is: ………….. The subject I want to work on with my friend is: …………. The action I am going to do is: ……………….	**An Appreciation Card:** ……………………… are the friends who helped me. What exactly did they do for me: ……………….. How did they help me? …..……………….

Table 2 The Directed Behaviour Cards

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[134] Interviews with teachers, teaching different grades and different subjects, in the school case study, Damascus, Syria, in 2015.

[135] Interview with a psychological counselor, at the school case study, Damascus, Syria on 9 June 2015.

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Express My Feelings Card:

I did a good action which is ………………..

I was the reason to make my friend …………………… happy.

I want to explain my feeling:

I am happy that my friends are happy.

Sharing my friends' happiness is the source of my happiness.

-…………………………………………………………………….

- ……………………………………………………………………

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Table 3 The Directed Behaviour Cards

Schools can also provide one-day training courses for parents every month. It is necessary to keep parents up to date about the education standards of their children, their achievements, the difficulties they are facing, and how to deal with all of that. In case parents are not able to attend school meetings or training, schools can provide weekly or monthly reports (in a special notebook) about students' performance, behaviours and problems, requesting comments by parents. Some parents may not be familiar with the education process and its challenges. Therefore, putting parents in the picture of the difficulties and challenges teachers are facing can help remove some pressure from teachers and lead to more cooperation among parents[136].

Empowering the community and civil society is also an effective tool to develop Peace Education. Local communities should be empowered to obtain the necessary resources,

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[136] Interviews with teachers, teaching different grads and different subjects, in the school case study, Damascus, Syria, in 2015.

knowledge, and confidence in order to identify the collective problems and determine the current needs for change. In other words, communities should see beyond the small scope and beyond just resolving a few problems and instead should start moving towards a culture of peace. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) are some of the organizations which are working to organize programs to empower civil society. Women's Empowerment and Protection Project is one of these projects which provides support and knowledge (UNRWA, 2011: 1). In case of security concerns, the projects can be organised and held in neighboring countries and can support some key figures to attend and become a good influence on civil society in their regions. A good example of that is the workshop that was held in Beirut, Lebanon, by Noun Organizations to develop Peacebuilding in the civil society in Syria. The organization hosted and trained 20 people from Syria (Noun, 2014).

Furthermore, Mass Media and the Internet can be heavily involved in spreading awareness in the civil society for developing an Education for Peace. Media is an alternative method to achieve Education for Peace by sharing different perspectives and approaches on dispute resolution. The Ministry of Education can use radio and television broadcasting to prepare teachers and support Education for Peace tools. The Ministry can broadcast daily educational programs on TV and offer radio programs for self-guided learning. Typical lessons can be provided by professionals who could explain how to use and integrate Education for Peace tools and values in the curriculum and deal with the current challenges.

In the future, this idea can be extended to establish an Educational Media Center or an agency that produces programs for many subjects for primary school students who drop out of school due to issues related to the crisis. A similar experience was set up in Ethiopia. In 1967, the Educational Mass Media Center was established and expanded over the years to support formal

education in many ways. This program works on developing the qualifications of teachers at primary schools by using distance education programs. For example, the center produces radio programs at the regional level in local languages in most subjects of primary school grades. Every week the program offers 15 minutes of each major school subject to improve the quality of primary education (Tilson and Bekele, 2000: 29- 30).

There is a similar initiative called the Syrian Educational Platforms by the National Center for the Development of Educational Curricula in the Ministry of Education. According to the website, this Platform aims to "share knowledge and skills among experts and learners from all segments of society in an engaging, interactive, freeway in the Arabic language" (Syrian Educational Platform, 2022). The platform includes a comprehensive database that includes educational curricula and learning resources (books, presentations...etc.), scientific conferences, interactive educational participation, and discussion through the network (Virtual School Webinar) to transfer knowledge. The Platform is an attempt by experienced teachers and supervisors to illustrate how to give lessons from the curricula to students, and make them available on the site for reference. Students can also send their questions related to the curriculum and exams and they will be answered.

5.7 Conclusion:

The previous chapter discussed how education system at the pre-univesrity level supports elements of Peace Education and its methods and work to integrate peace values within the curriculum. Based on two case studies, the investigation outcome demonstrated the tools of the theoretical part harmonise with the tools and aims of Education of Peace. But unfortunately, these theories are not put into practice. There is a significant gap between the theoretical part and the

practical part. This chapter investigated the causes of this gap. The research mainly focuses on two central questions:

- Are students' psychological and educational needs met?

- Are teachers qualified to deliver the tools of Education of Peace?

Students do not receive emotional support to positively address psychological trauma and vent negative feelings. That leads to many problems, some of which include:

1- A tendency to violence

2- Normalising violence

3- Dropping out of school

Several suggestions can provide the support that students need. One solution is to have psychosocial support as a component of education. An hour of psychological counselling as part of the curriculum guide helps students cope with their day-to-day difficulties. Furthermore, increasing extracurricular activities and involving students in decision-making in their schools develops communication and conflict resolution skills. In addition, it contributes to embracing alternative discipline methods and considering constructive discipline a tool in developing students' skills.

Many teachers agree that there is no particular subject discussing the current crisis. The curriculum is challenging and not easy to follow. It is intense, and there is no time for students' engagement or to deliver the peace values. Although there are no specific materials related to the current situation, the curriculum is full of related topics and activities that teachers can use to deal with daily problems and help students cope. However, teachers do not have the needed skills to

deliver curricula supporting Education for Peace. They are not prepared to convey the tools or the required information in the given time.

The qualifications of teachers were in question. The criteria of teachers' requirements and capabilities in the Syrian curriculum perfectly meet the goals of Education for Peace. Another theoretical part does not match the practical part. What are the practical implementation strategies regarding the preparation of teachers? The participatory observation I attended and the many interviews conducted helped identify the problems. There are obstacles facing the process of teachers' training, and it consists of two parts: teachers' guide and teachers' training.

The theoretical part of the teachers' guides is intelligible; however, teachers face several difficulties. Many teachers commented that the instructions in teachers' guides are clearly expressed. However, it does not have instructions or models for every class. In addition, the affective aims are not evident in some lessons. The distribution of classes' timetables in the teacher's guide and the amount of information and activities in every lesson do not fit. They believe that is challenging, especially for teachers without experience. Teachers do not realize that using these activities may require less time teaching and make their teaching more relevant and more understandable to the students.

The Ministry of Education is organising teachers' training to overcome the difficulties mentioned above teachers face. However, the process of teachers' training faces challenges, including a short training period for trainers and trainees of teachers. Some teachers are poorly motivated to work on class preparation and develop new skills. They prefer detailed guidance easy to follow from the Ministry. Teachers should be aware of their responsibility in building a whole generation for a society with a culture of peace. This responsibility should be a motivation in itself.

However, challenges facing teachers should be considered to provide possible solutions. Solutions include reasonable salaries, psychological support, and better methods of training. It is essential to make training practical more than theoretical, re-evaluate the teacher periodically, and intensify the training courses throughout the year. Teachers in the classroom are facilitators, planners, initiators, guides, mediators, and evaluators. Experience without knowledge does not equip teachers with the necessary skills. Experience and expertise without training courses are not enough either. Experience and well-organized knowledge without motivated teachers are not sufficient as well. Motivated, skilled, trained teachers can make a big difference. There are many spaces for development in the curriculum.

Empowering the community and civil society is part of the solution and an effective tool for developing Education for Peace. Training programs and regular meetings between school and parents. Mass Media and the Internet can be heavily involved in spreading awareness of the importance of Peace Education in dealing with the current challenges. Radical change is difficult. However, many small steps, many imperfect peace(s), and creative initiatives are practiced by motivated and dedicated educators all over the country.

Final Conclusion

Figure 55 Goodbye[137]

"Paradoxically, peace education comes from exposure to conflict, learning from people who disagree with you rather than those who agree".

(Lynn Davies, 2005: 356)

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[137] Akad, Aytac and Unal, Selin (2013), "Toys for Syrian Children", https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/12342-from-paris-with-love-toys-for-syrian-children.html, UNHCR, 27 May 2022.

"Peace of mind is not the absence of conflict from life, but the ability to cope with it".

<div align="right">(Shubnell, 2009: 19).</div>

6.1 Overall Summary:

6.1.1 The Impact of Conflicts and Education for Peace as a Solution:

The devastating impact of conflict "can extend across decades and even generations … conflict leaves a legacy of damaged human capital that will lower productivity, weaken growth, and slow poverty reduction far into the future" (Corral and other, 2020: 33). Children are the most vulnerable and affected group in this equation. The separation from parents or family members, displacement, "parents' extreme preoccupation" with supporting the family, or "emotional unavailability" of parents inflict enduring effects on children such as social and cultural losses, psychological suffering, and moral and spiritual impacts (Santa Barbara, 2006: 891). Unfortunately, the conflict in Syria has changed the lives and the futures of generations of children and their course of life for many years to come. Children suffer a long-term negative impact on their growth, development, and wellbeing. "Conflict harms children's health in less visible ways that also carry consequences for long-term welfare" (Corral and other, 2020: 34).

Education is a "more powerful weapon than war" (Thomas, 2015: 1). Education has been described as a great equalizer; "education's role as a 'great equalizer' allows individuals to overcome obstacles faced by socioeconomic status" (Thomas, 2015: 7). It equips individuals with the skills to survive and thrive. It supports children's development of social, emotional, cognitive, and communication skills. Quality education is a remedy to many social issues. It is a "social healing" tool moving toward Education for Peace and a culture of peace (Santa Barbara, 2006: 893). Peace Education is central to creating resources for social needs and development.

Over the past decade, conflicts in the Arab States have severely affected society and individuals. Nelson Mandela believed that "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". This led me to raise the question of which kinds of education methods are being applied in the Arab region. I wondered whether education is activated to help society overcome crises' impacts and bring reform and positive change. Are there elements of Peace Education in the Arab States' school systems? Does the curriculum contribute to children's well-being? Does it support children's ability to cope with the current situation difficulties? What is the role of the school curriculum in building a culture of peace? After a destructive crisis, it is a must to invest in developing our society. Peace Education is an essential investment for the coming generations.

6.1.2 The Problem and the Objective:

For the previous reasons, this research provided a holistic view of the situation of education in the Arab world and the obstacles that prevent the education system from its role in society's development. Specifically, it focused on the difficulties the young Syrians are dealing with at schools due to the country's severe crisis. Education is a powerful means of spreading awareness among generations badly affected by the impact of conflicts. Generations deal with violence, depression, anxiety, and difficulty connecting with others and controlling their feelings. The younger generation needs to view the current situation with attentiveness to the constructive actions that can be applied. They have to be provided with a future vision to change attitudes and stimulate energy. To change the world, we need to change ourselves first. Since the school curriculum has a powerful influence on students, a solid coherent curriculum that supports Peace Education is a valuable tool in the development at the individual, social, national, and global levels.

Dr. Parsanjeet Kumar, the director of Anand College of Education in Agra, mentioned in the National Conference on Peace Education in 2010 "… *there are no simple answers to how education can contribute towards ... development. But increasing awareness through education seems to be a way towards the kind of mobilisation that is necessary…*" (Kumar, 2010: 2; italics in the original). Similarly, my purpose is to raise awareness about the importance of incorporating peace values and conflict transformation elements into the Syrian curriculum to help students face the current crisis and contribute to a more peaceful future.

In particular, the research focused on the ways and methods that the primary school curriculum in Syria can be adjusted to integrate elements of Peace Education as a tool to be used by youth for peaceful conflict transformation in the current crisis and beyond. To answer this question, the study concentrated on two parts; theoretical and practical. In the first three chapters, I justified the reasons for carrying out this study. Then, I laid the foundation of this research with theories, studies, and previous experience. The fourth and fifth chapters are based on the findings of field case studies and focus on the practical application of the theories.

6.1.3 Brief Chapters' Summary:

The first chapter demonstrated that peace is the rhythm of unity through which we better understand the different fields of life (Weble and Galtung, 2007: 5). Peace and war are related to human nature. Imperfect peace allows us to pursue peace as humans with all our negative and positive characteristics. Peace studies explore peace and conflict to develop a deeper understanding and better awareness of their reasons and results. It aims to transform conflict situations through peaceful means and achieve a culture of peace. However, peace is more than the absence of

violence; a culture of peace cannot be established by simply reaching the negative peace; the absence of violence.

A culture of peace requires practical elements driven by societies and people that support active and positive peace. Positive peace participates in thriving economies, individuals' well-being, and high levels of adaptability to change. Developing a culture of peace requires an educational system that offers Education for Peace and supports a culture of imperfect peace. A sustainable system of Education for Peace focuses on advancing harmony among people and encourages positive, peaceful thinking through dialogue and communication.

Chapter Two illustrated that Peace Education goes beyond conflicts and peaceful transformation. It builds the foundation of a culture of peace. It is a tool for national and international understanding, human rights, life skills, and environmental awareness. The Peace Education methods existed throughout history and were practiced formally and informally. The aim of Peace Education extends to infusing peace values into the curriculum. The methodology of Peace Education can be integrated into the pedagogy at all levels using various techniques, including subject content, teaching methods, and co-curricular activities. This chapter outlined that teaching Peace Education does not require a separate subject as it can be integrated into any aspect of a school curriculum.

Recognising students' needs is essential in designing an Education for Peace curriculum. Once the needs are highlighted, the aims can be set. The chapter clarified that the role of students should not only be "collectors" of data. A banking education system where students receive education passively with no connection to their reality is unable to develop students' essential life skills. Students need opportunities for creativity, imagination, critical thinking, and problem-solving capacity. Schools have the responsibility for building a peaceful culture inside schools by

promoting an atmosphere of trust, cooperation among students and teachers, appreciation, belongingness, and mutual respect.

Education for Peace should emerge from a society's specific culture and identity for culturally appropriate approaches to spread peace values. The example of a tailor-made Education for Peace program in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) proved the possibility of applying the practice of Peace Education values. With a cooperative effort at the individual, community, national and global levels, Peace Education teaching methodologies can be used in all aspects of a school curriculum and equip educators with practical tools for peaceful conflict transformation.

Chapter Three provided a holistic overview of the education system in the Arab States and the challenging facing it. It demonstrated early childhood education's importance in children's behavioural development. Early education provides children with the required skills for a sustainable society. Therefore, it is essential to integrate the values of Peace Education into an early education curriculum, especially at the primary level. Education and the schooling system in the Arab region are in a dire situation after more than a decade of crises in the area. Despite the progress in developing the education system, conflicts have destructive effects on the education sector and children's lives.

The Arab States need a quality education that raises awareness about societal, economic, and environmental issues and motivates action for sustainable development. It is crucial to advance the quality of teaching to develop students' skills in dealing with the current situation. Applying Peace Education methods to the classroom teaching and learning process makes it more engaging and related to real-life problems and the work market. A culture of peace needs to identify the underlying issues and develop a strategy suitable for the deep culture of the Arab culture, society,

communities, and individuals. However, it is crucial to consider the differences in terms of the learning process, facilities, and the quality of education among the Arab States.

Since every educational system in the Arab States has its own different characteristics and challenges, Chapter Four narrowed the search to more in-depth case studies in Syria to focus on the Syrian educational system, a primary school in Damascus in 2015, 2018, and 2019 and the First Syrian Youth Conference. The research methodology is based on participatory observation, interviews, and focus groups. The field case studies provided the investigation with the theoretical and practical ground. It revealed that the structural educational system of schools and the principles and the aims of the Syrian curriculum are in coherence with Peace Education principles and aims. The Syrian Ministry of Education realizes the challenges education has faced during the crisis and is working on solutions. A few solutions have already been implemented, such as the developed curriculum, which promotes students' engagement through activities-based learning, open questions, and creative problem-solving.

Other solutions are still under consideration. Due to the current situation, solutions require more time, effort, and collaboration by the education system, students, and communities. It is crucial to develop a strategy that addresses the students' needs and is feasible in the current situation.

Chapter Five continued by providing the findings of the case studies. It underlined that Syrian education's standards and aims support the elements and the methods of Peace Education. Nevertheless, there are gaps between the theoretical and practical parts. The finding demonstrated that students do not receive the psychological and emotional support to express their negative feelings in positive and healthy ways. That leads to normalising violence and dropping out of school.

The teachers' qualifications were also in question, especially in terms of their preparation and ability to effectively provide instruction or deliver the syllabus using the principles of Peace Education in the Syrian curriculum. Some teachers from old methods do not perceive the importance of the new techniques in class preparation and would rather have detailed plain guidance from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is organising training courses; unfortunately, teachers' training process faces challenges. In addition, teachers also face other social and economic difficulties due to the current situation.

However, during the participatory observation in the teachers' training in the school case study, teachers were motivated and willing to work hard and learn more about Peace Education after understanding its methods and aims. In addition, some Syrian teachers are already doing a great job of applying activities and integrating elements of peace values into the curriculum. The students from the case study offered to be part of the solution to promote positive change in the classroom and beyond. Some suggestions were provided to enhance the schooling process and meet their needs. They emphasized developing the communication methods among students, the teaching team, and the educational system. Other recommendations were provided; receiving psychological counselling, increasing extracurricular activities, adopting constructive discipline methods, and participating in the decision-making.

6.2 Recommendations:

Motivated, skilled, trained teachers with the Education for Peace program are vital to supporting and motivating generations of children to create the society of their dreams. After identifying some problems and obstacles from the students' points of view and key figures in the

education systems, some recommendations can be considered at the curriculum, students', and teachers' levels.

- **Curriculum**:

Students need a curriculum that supports Peace Education principles. This type of curriculum would:

1- Support social, emotional, cognitive, and communication development.

2- Provide a flexible education enables schools to accommodate individual needs.

3- Include engaging mechanisms to gain students' attention and make learning an appealing process.

4- Apply to real life and provide support and guidance to deal with the current situation.

5- Be relevant to work opportunities and provides opportunities to develop the work market skills.

6- Society-based curriculum emerges from the deep culture of the society with culturally accepted tools and methods to spread Peace Education values.

7- Mass Media and the Internet can provide education programs by spreading awareness and values of Peace Education to deal with the current challenges

- **Teachers practice:**

Improving the quality of teacher performance is the most critical investment in education, and it requires:

1- Well-being and psychological support from school administration, education system, and society.

2- Professional development support.

3- Intense training and regular supervision by the school management and the Ministry of Education throughout the year.

4- Implementation of peer-to-peer learning.

5- Periodic performance management assessment for re-evaluating teacher performance and insights into the strengths and weaknesses to develop skills and promote well-being

6- Teachers should be involved in classes' timetables distribution decisions.

- **Child learning and well-being:**

Children are the foundation of a sustainable society. For students to be instruments for positive change, they need to observe and experience a culture of peace within the schooling system. This would include:

1- Psychological counselling support for processing their feelings and problems in healthy ways.

2- Social and emotional learning support.

3- Extracurricular education and activities that improve mental health, promote social skills and motivate children to be in education.

4- A student-teacher relationship that is built on mutual respect, not fear.

5- Students' involvement in school decisions that develops students' communication and conflict resolution skills and a sense of responsibility.

- **Community and Civil Society:**

Empowering the community and civil society is part of the solution and an effective tool for developing Education for Peace.

1- Communication between schools and home is crucial. For an effective learning process, parents' cooperation with the schooling system is fundamental to becoming more active in their children's learning and wellbeing.

2- Training programs and regular meetings between school and parents to clarify the importance of school and raise awareness of the relationship between learning and the well-being of their children.

3- The community must realize that school is not only a place for education, but it is to develop and discover life skills, build friendships, widen visions and perspectives, and build a sustainable society.

6.3 Future Research:

The research sought to gain a deeper understanding of the situation of the Syrian education system. Nevertheless, the subject is complex and broad and needs more research and fieldwork. Despite the effort to collect the data for this research, much work still needs to be done. More follow-up is needed on teachers' training and performance and the impacts on students, teachers, and the schooling system. The research widens to include Education for Peace in preparatory, secondary, and university education. More investigations are required to understand the obstacles and the impacts of conflicts on teenagers and young adults and their needs from the education system.

Feedback from students and their parents regarding the influence of the learning process on their relationships and social and individual skills is vital for evaluating the implementation of Peace Education. However, assessing the achievement of implementing Peace Education is challenging due to the "subjective nature of the learning experiences received" (UNESCO, 2001:

18). Achieving a culture of peace is collective work. It is crucial to consider the influence of communities on the learning process and the influence of a learning process of Peace Education on the communities. It is a mutual relation, and the significant role of the community in consolidating a culture of peace cannot be ignored. Observation and investigation are required to focus on other obstacles and find solutions. Finding solutions and applying them are two different things. It is, after all, a collective work, and one hand can never clap.

Education is the beacon that should not be extinguished because, as Paulo Freire said, "right thinking is right doing" (Freire, 1998). We are the students of life, which never tires of giving us new challenges every single day to master our abilities in finding new solutions and widening our vision to see what really matters. Our past and our experiences should be the solid pillars on which we build a desirable and more peaceful future. The school principal once said, "we should exploit the power of normalizing the crisis in nurturing hope and strength in children to continue with life".[138] The will to live is stronger than the power of fear. There is always hope; in the end, it is all about how you choose to live.

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[138] Interview with case study school principal, Damascus, Syria in 2015.

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Leo Tolstoy wrote, "Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself".

<p style="text-align: right">(Wall and Knights, 2013: 12).</p>

Index: Classroom Activities

Some classroom activities and practical tools are provided below. The aim is to develop teachers' practical behaviour skills to identify peace values in the school subjects, and connect them to real-life even when the value is not clearly highlighted. These tools empower children with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to build a sustainable society (UNESCO, 2001: 6). The following part explains some techniques for integrating peace values in primary school subjects.

1- Art:

Art is a powerful tool in children's "peace vision and attitudes". Art's endless topics strengthen the values and the components of Peace Education. Handicrafts, drawing, singing, dancing, and creative writing are tools through which children process and vent their negative feeling (UNESCO, 2001: 25- 26). This tool can be used in almost all subjects: Science, Art, History, Languages even Philosophy. Ask students to draw, write or sing what a specific idea means to them and their future, including peace, love, empathy, past, tomorrow, and history. Then conducting a discussion about that may raise awareness and add more perspectives. Use students' drawings, handicrafts, and creative writing to decorate a room or a corner in the class or school and call it the peace corner. This corner can create a safe place where a child can seek whenever she or he has emotional disturbance and need help, a quiet moment, or a space (The Alliance for

Childhood, 2005). Encourage students to participate by organizing peace-related topics, school exhibitions, singing competitions, and theaters with themes that focus on students' self-development (UNESCO, 2001: 26).

Theaters and drama support understanding others' perspectives, feelings, and actions by stepping into "someone else's shoes". For example, students can exchange roles; girls "can play the role of boys", students can play the role of teachers, workers become the managers, and vice versa. There is a possibility for some challenges when for example, many students want to play the same part or some students refuse to play a particular role. Regarding the desired part, the same scene can be repeated multiple times with different students. Regarding the unwanted parts, teachers can ask for a volunteer, or they can play the role. Another option is to use "the empty-chair technique". This technique means that other students act as if there is a person, but the person cannot participate in this play. At the same time, everyone else can address the person in the empty chair. Even though the questions go unanswered, the discussion describes the situation and reveals information about the case and the participating people. Especially if the group has to find a possible solution to the situation. Teachers need to clarify it is hard to see through someone's eyes no matter how we try to understand others' feelings (Wagner, 2005: 31- 34, 51). Every student must feel that his or her participation is essential. The chosen group should have diverse personalities and cultural backgrounds to enrich the role play and support the values of Peace Education. Moreover, the drama should be full of fun, motivating, and full of values to be worth playing (UNESCO, 2001: 25).

Teachers can use any text or a poem with a specific value to inspire students to make a play from the theme. Moreover, a theme for a role-play can be chosen from stories students share with their class from their life. The recommended age for students is ten and over. The size of the group

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can be between 4 to 20 students. In the case of a big-size class, this activity is done in two groups. Divide the group into groups of 3 to 4 students. Give each group a copy of the play, asking them to depend on improvisations in their acts, and then give them some time to plan and rehearse (Wagner, 2005: 36).

For example, a lesson focuses on the value of forgiveness. The teacher can write the word "Forgiveness" on the board, and ask students for a definition and examples in line with the definition. After describing the meaning of forgiveness, the teacher can present a problematic story, for example, a fight between two students (UNESCO, 2001: 100). It is preferable to make a life-related problem. For instance, student A made fun of student B due to his old clothes. Student B, whose family was displaced, felt angry and replied using bad words to end up with a fight. Student B is full of negative thoughts and seeks more violence. After the story, the teacher asks students to start a role-play where they express student B's rage, following with a discussion about the adverse effects of anger. The story and the role-play demonstrated that rage and revenge do not lead to any solutions. Communication and forgiveness is the solution. It is helpful that the teacher draws a table on the board for the situation's benefits and consequences, asking students to fill it in (Table 4).

Table 4 A Summary Table[139]

Benefits of not Forgiving	Benefits of Forgiving
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

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[139] Table 4 - Revised and based on UNESCO (2001), *Learning the Way of Peace: A Teachers' Guide to Peace Education*, New Delhi, UNESCO, p. 100.

This follows with a discussion about students' opinions and the possible solutions. The last part of the activity is to invite students to do the role-play again but with a different scenario for student B (UNESCO, 2001: 99- 100). The same activity can be adapted to fit many scenarios, for example, in Sciences, to develop values like abstaining from harming all living things.

2- Mathematics:

Most people see Mathematics as a static dry subject in the curricula with no relation to our social real life. As a matter of fact, this subject can be related to reality and Peace Education in various approaches. Math can be given more meaning by using activities, assignments, and exercises related to the students' lives and their current situation and highlight issues at national and global levels. Teachers can prepare useful and relevant activities based on facts such as economic conditions, and health (UNESCO, 2001: 28- 29). When teaching percentages in primary school, teachers can include calculations of proportion and percentages to compare the number of children who have dropped out of school with those still attending class, both before and after the crisis. Teachers also can shed light on some social problems by providing calculations or equations of the life expenses before and after the crisis. This kind of information focuses on the results of the crisis creating motivations and insights for new solutions.

Instead of giving students a math problem full of abstract numbers that do not mean anything to them, we can relate this problem to a daily event like going to a vegetable market where the prices have risen due to the crisis. With a limited budget and a long list of food, students have to compare prices and make the correct calculation to buy the food sticking to the budget. In this way, math can be used to develop a life skill.

3- Science:

For many, Science does not identify human values and inner knowledge. Teachers can make science an appealing subject by discussing important issues in line with the topics of the lessons. Teachers clarify that science seeks people's welfare and practical solutions to difficulties facing people in times of crisis. Therefore, the new generation should make their contributions to science and society.

If the lesson is about natural resources, teachers can clarify the importance of not exploiting natural resources (UNESCO, 2001: 91) highlighting that the morality of science respects life and Mother Earth, and more consumption does not bring happiness. If the class is about animals, teachers can support values through examples of animals' behaviours, such as dogs are faithful, camels are tolerant and cats are clean. If the class is about plants, students can put the lesson into practice by planting, for example, a flower in the schoolyard exploring the plants, soil, and roots. Through this activity, students raise awareness about the environment and participate in beautifying their school, which develops a sense of achievement and belonging. Children have their own way of interpreting the secrets of nature and its peace. Teachers can ask for the inner reflection that nature inspires them (The Alliance for Childhood, 2005)**.**

4- Classroom Activities:

A. Classroom Activities' Aim:

Many games and activities support Peace Education components. An engaging lesson full of joy and life is a successful lesson. With joy, any lesson sticks in the memory. Spreading positive feelings can be through starting classes with warm-up games to increase feelings of wonder, curiosity, and fun (UNESCO, 2001: 23-25, 33). Teachers guide students through some clues to

discover the aims of the lesson or present lessons by telling stories connecting them to life and humanity from a Peace Education perspective.

To make the learning process engaging, teachers need to deliver the lesson in clear, uncomplicated language. Start with an exciting introduction and some techniques such as problem-solving or getting students involved in challenging learning activities like singing, listening to songs, role-plays, and instant drama. Making the classroom a lovely place to develop a co-operative and friendly atmosphere is necessary. An atmosphere full of mutual respect, sympathy, and courtesy can be fostered through the proper interaction between teacher-student and student-student. Arranging certain activities can contribute to creating a positive social atmosphere. Social events and activities, from singing to short excursions, bring students together, support children's social needs and emotional development, and create positive attitudes in the class (UNESCO, 2001: 25; Freire, 1970).

B. Time Managing:

Although the activities can easily be adapted to fit different subjects and circumstances, some teachers may argue that managing these activities in the available time space is challenging. However, using Peace Education strategies and tools helps save time. Arranging joyful classes and topics connected to students' lives helps students learn faster and more effectively. Extended activities which may require more than five minutes, such as Sports, Music, and Art, can be applied when there is more flexibility in time. To manage class time, teachers should be precise when giving students instructions. For example, teachers could set a timer and follow it when they give students five minutes for an activity. Asking students to control the time after discussing and writing the class timetable on the board develop students' sense of time. At the beginning of the

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class, teachers have to lay out starting time and ending time in an organized way, for example, from 9:00 to 9:05, warm-up games or energy exercises, from 9:05 to 9:20, revision and check homework, from 9:20 to 9:45, new lessons, and finally, questions from 9:45 to 9:50. Hanging a clock or drawing a big clock on the board could provide great help. In a short time, students internalise organizing time themselves (Maghan, 2013).

SMART Skills:

SMART skill is a strategy that provides teachers with tools to develop skills that help in saving time during lessons. These skills are represented by SMART[140]. SMART is "Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely" (figure 57). A SMART goal supports reaching your aim by following steps to organise your efforts and work plan. This strategy highlights steps to make the teacher's work plan "specific", "clear", "attainable", "relevant to life purpose", and "with a clearly defined timeline". The five "W" questions are one of the SMART techniques and include:

1. Who: Who is involved in this goal?
2. What: What do I want to accomplish?
3. Where: Where is this goal to be achieved?
4. When: When do I want to achieve this goal?
5. Why: Why do I want to achieve this goal?

(Corporate Finance Institute, 2022).

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[140] Interview with English teacher (number 2), at the school case study in 2019, Damascus, Syria.

Figure 56 SMART Goals[141]

C. Activities techniques:

This part shares a few techniques that can be applied in all school subjects to integrate Peace Education elements during classes and the free hour[142].

1- Brainstorming:

It is an approach to problem-solving with lateral thinking in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. It encourages students to generate ideas that can form part of creative solutions (Mind Tools, 2021). Ask students to close their eyes and say the first thing that comes to their mind; an

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[141]Corporate Finance Institute (2022), "SMART Goals", CFI Education Inc., 14 May 2022, https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/other/smart-goal/

[142]According to the schools' supervisor, every teacher has two lessons every month during which she can apply activities. The class can be taught outside the classroom, but inside the school under the supervision of the school principal. In addition, the social and psychological guides have a class every month during which they can provide lessons related to any issues they believe are important for students' development using the Ministry's guide.

animal, an attitude, dreams, an image or a story from the curriculum, a problem that happened in school, or a famous show. If more than one student speaks at the exact moment, they must wait their turn. The same ideas can be repeated many times. There are no wrong ideas during brainstorming, and all thoughts are acceptable. There is no judgment during the activities because criticism will prevent idea generating and creativity (Wagner, 2005: 46).

2- Visual aids: Teaching Values Using Visual aids and Videos

Visual aids, including short videos followed by discussion, are effective activities to deliver values and are applicable in all subjects. During my interview with the schools' supervisor, she showed me a three-minute video of a cat and a bird. For almost two minutes, the bird was disturbing the cat, who was trying to sleep. The cat was very tolerant in his reaction. He tried to keep the bird away from him nicely and patiently. The bird finally got tired and flew away. Teachers can use this video to highlight the value of tolerance by questioning the cat and the bird's behaviours. For example, what is the reason for the cat's patience despite being bigger and stronger? Is it possible that the bird bothers the cats to play with him? Such videos encourage students to be tolerant of other students, find excuses for their friends' behaviour, and find non-violent ways to solve problems. [143]

3- Inner Peace:

To create empathy towards others, students must "develop compassion feelings" for themselves and others. Compassion and "deep feeling" for others help to experience positive emotions and inner peace and create a healthy atmosphere. One of the activities to achieve that is

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[143] Interview with schools' supervisor in Damascus, Syria in 2015.

to ask students to relax, close their eyes, think of some of their wishes, "May I be happy… [and] healthy", then ask them to imagine that these wishes are answered, and they are happier. Ask them to repeat these wishes, but this time for their loved ones "May they be happy… [and] healthy" then imagine that their compassion makes their loved ones happier and healthier. Finally, ask them to extend their wishes and compassion to all creatures on earth "May all beings be happy… [and] healthy" and imagine that their love and compassion make everyone happier and healthier (UNESCO, 2001: 92). When students respect these wishes mentally, they subconsciously develop love, sympathy, compassion, and inner peace towards themselves and others.

4- Critical Thinking:

Critical thinking is a cognitive skill that helps people think independently, rationally, creatively, and clearly, to make well-informed decisions. It promotes the ability to question, examine, evaluate, reflect and investigate assumptions with no basis. This skill sets personal growth and supports a better understanding of problems. It can be applied in all classes for upper primary students.

> Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.
> (Scriven and Paul, 1987).

The six keywords for critical thinking are: what, why, how, when, where, and who (figure 57).
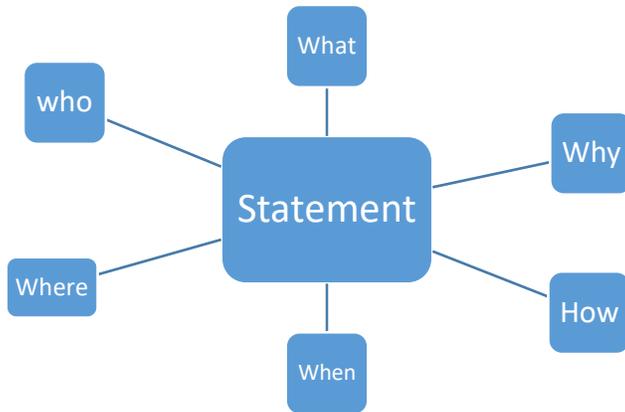
Figure 57 The Six Keywords for Critical Thinking[144]

Teachers can present a problem to students; they need to find the truth and decide using these keys. This technique develops investigation and analysis skills and highlights that not all stories, statements, and assumptions are accurate. The activity starts with a statement given by one of the students (student A), Plants need sunlight, or I saw the thief. Students start asking student A questions using the six keywords. What thief are you talking about? Why do you say he is a thief? When did you see the thief? Where were you? Who was with you? After the activity, the class discusses some questions like: what have we learned? Was it difficult or easy? Explain why? Can you apply this activity in your life? How? (UNESCO, 2001: 176).

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[144] Figure 57 - Revised and based on UNESCO (2001), *Learning the Way of Peace: A Teachers' Guide to Peace Education*, New Delhi, UNESCO, p. 177.