Chapter 21

Importance of Classroom Settings in Educational Institutions to Promote Peacebuilding Through a Specific Intended Learning Outcome

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ABSTRACT

Over the decades, there has been an emphasis on the importance of peace education for improving culture of peace in society. The effect of this is very much important and attached to classroom settings in education, because classroom settings in a culture of peace situation have created an enabling environment for stakeholders to get engaged in activities, that are geared towards building positive peace. It indicated that peace education creates conducive environments to meet the emotional, social, and intellectual needs of diverse groups of individuals interested in empowering themselves. The emphasis on classroom settings and peace education is based on the fact that these two areas are inseparable aspects of culture of peace. No culture of peace is truly progressive without the universal principles of peace building.

INTRODUCTION

Peace and peace education are important today because of the proliferation of competitive economy and knowledge. Yet, without any valid reason, violence and conflicts among ethnic groups, countries or nations has become very common. While advances in digital communication may account for this, the main reason is the absence of peace education and a culture of peace. Thus, peace and education
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constitute an inter-reliant factor because education assists building of peace while maintaining cohesion and prosperity within the social groups that enhance knowledge and positive attitudes for the purpose of living in harmony. Having peace in an educational background indicates the absence of conflict or violence and enhances societal security and the deeper understanding of others’ values.

Sadly, it is rare to see characteristics of understanding, tolerance and goodwill among humans as a whole in today’s world. However, to cultivate the peace of the society, especially through education, it is important to recognize opportunities and stakeholders which will participate widely enough to change societal thinking towards the building of peace. Education can assist stakeholders to learn peace to overcome violence and conflicts through various educational activities to promote “do no harm”.

The promotion of peacebuilding in education faces many challenges: conflicts between ethnic groups, the vast spread of racism among them, alignments that promote violence, massive human rights violations, and even rich and poor separatism. Therefore, it is very difficult to introduce new educational programs to promote peace. There are various reasons. Among them, a huge knowledge and skills gaps in peace, peace education and culture of peace- and conflict-oriented knowledge which consumes education. However, to promote “do no harm,” one of the responsibilities in education is to take steps to somehow embark on these complex and interlinked problems because it is believed that education can change deeply embedded human attitudes positively into a peace mentality.

Social groups such as Altman (2002) have described a world infested with adversity. The building of a nation with peace mentality, even in education, cannot be done effortlessly, especially when one considers the values of human diversity and enhancement of toleration and acceptance of human dignity. For that, education has to fill the gap in various perspectives to ensure a conflict- and violence-free society and nation. As a result, peace education has to be introduced in various methods with a broad strategy to transmit societal conflict into peacebuilding situations with an interest in maintaining human security.

It is significant that peace cannot be achieved without participation of the people of society. UNICEF defined this involvement as the process of promoting knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioral change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level. (Bush and Salterelli, 2000) This cannot be achieved without full understanding of conditions needed in bringing seeds of the culture of peace in society.

For peace education, professionals in education have to introduce holistic and empowering curricula that cultivate a culture of peace in all stakeholders’ minds. The concept of peace education has typically focused on “do no harm” while enhancing improvement in communication skills such as those Balanandan (1998) mentioned for preventing violence. Peace education builds trust among stakeholders and reacts positively to speed up the peacebuilding process. This is identical to reporting that educational institutions have a key role to play today, for students who grow with conflict situations become more desensitized to violence. As a result, the role of peace education takes on even greater importance. For example, peace education has the power to shape the attitudes and skills of society towards peaceful relations. Further, it is important to teach young children to understand values of respect, tolerance, and empathy; to build necessary skills to resolve conflict in a non-violent manner, and to facilitate and foster peaceful relations at home, at school and around the world.