Helpdesk Research Report

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Curriculum development in fragile states to encourage peace and reduction of conflict

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Question

Review the literature to identify lessons learned and/or promising practices related to education curriculum development/adaptation in fragile states to encourage peace and reduction of conflict. Specific examples that demonstrate the positive aspects of relevant curriculum (and curriculum development practices) are desirable.

Contents

1. Overview

- Curricula have the potential to promote peacebuilding attitudes and behaviours, but can also be vehicles for promoting sectarianism and militarism and/or for oppressing marginalised groups.

- The evidence base on the impact of curricular approaches on peacebuilding is limited. Programmes are rarely evaluated using rigorous methods and most of the research is observational and qualitative.

- Education to promote peacebuilding, or *Learning to Live Together,* can be introduced into curricula through stand-alone subjects such as peace education, ethics education, human rights education, or integrated throughout the curriculum using carrier subjects such as history, social studies, life skills, civics, art and physical education.

- Peace education programmes that combine school-based lessons supported by well-designed teaching and learning materials with teacher training and community based training have been found to have positive impacts on participants' attitudes and behaviours in conflict-affected settings, at least in the short term.

- History education is contentious and sometimes removed from curricula in the post-conflict period. Innovative approaches to history teaching with potential to promote peacebuilding have been developed but these are rarely used in mainstream curricula.

- Citizenship education can be used to promote national unity and develop peacebuilding behaviours among youth.

- Mother tongue education can reduce learning disparity between groups but there can also be a case for using a single language of instruction to promote national unity.

- Technical and vocational education and training can provide youth with economically attractive alternatives to joining armed groups and assist with the reintegration of ex-combatants into society. However, there is a danger that such programmes can raise false expectations of employment prospects.

- A participatory approach to curriculum development can ensure that the needs of marginalised groups are taken into account and can be a peacebuilding process in itself. A project involving youth as facilitators of community consultations on the national curriculum in Somalia has shown many positive outcomes.

- A significant challenge for curriculum development for peacebuilding is to achieve an appropriate balance between embracing diversity (e.g. cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious) whilst seeking to promote national unity and identity.

2. Introduction: curricula for peace or conflict?

Research on education and conflict shows that education systems are not politically neutral but are an important part of the political economy that can exacerbate or mitigate conflict (Novelli et al., 2014; Bush and Saltareilli, 2000). The curriculum can be used as a vehicle to promote dominant ideologies. There are numerous instances where school curricula have been used to oppress particular ethnic groups and to

promote hatred, xenophobic and racist ideologies, militarism and religious warfare (Dupuy, 2008). Militarism has been explicitly promoted in textbooks in Afghanistan (Sigsgaard, 2009), and "military studies" was a mainstream subject in secondary schools in the Sudan (World Bank, 2008). Curricula may deliberately or unconsciously reinforce ethnic and other identity grievances through the choice of language of instruction, negative stereotyping, lack of representation of particular groups and through biased presentations of history (Haider, 2014).

There are also many examples of curricula that have been deliberately designed to promote peace: through direct teaching of peace education, or other subjects promoting tolerance, cooperation and negotiation skills such as *Learning to Live Together*, through subjects that aim to promote civic values and governance, or through inclusive approaches to choice of language of instruction, history and social studies curricula. There are also examples of curricula providing skills training for youth who have either been or are in danger of becoming combatants. These aim to equip them with economic skills that will provide alternatives to joining armed groups.

A first step in curriculum development to encourage peace and to reduce conflict is to conduct a conflict sensitivity analysis of existing curricula and curricular materials and to identify and remove elements that might actively encourage conflict. There is a growing literature on conflict sensitive education and a wide range of tools available for reviewing curricular and other aspects of education systems. For example, the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) has produced a conflict sensitive education pack.[1] Case studies on the application of conflict sensitive education assessments are beginning to be published. For example, Reisman and Janke (2015) reflect on the experience of applying a conflict sensitive approach to the South Sudan Teacher Education Project. Conflict sensitive education covers all aspects of education systems, not just the curriculum. It is considered in more detail in a previous paper from GSDRC (Haider, 2014).

The next step is to adapt and design curricula in ways that actively promote peace. This is the subject for this review. This paper looks at a range of approaches to developing curricula that promote peace, and the evidence, where available, of the effectiveness of such approaches.

3. The evidence base on curricula and peacebuilding

The UK Department for International Development (DfID) has commissioned two rigorous reviews relevant to curricula and peacebuilding: one on the political economy of education systems in conflict affected contexts (Novelli et al., 2014) and one on education in crisis affected contexts (Burde et. al., 2015). Burde et. al. (2015) found a lack of evidence regarding the relationship between educational content and participation in/support for violence. They noted that programmes such as human rights education and conflict resolution education were rarely evaluated in a rigorous manner, so that it was often not possible to assess the impact on student attitudes and behaviour. They found that peace education programmes were among the most widely evaluated type of programmes regarding learning outcomes, but that few studies used experimental designs and most evaluations tended to look at the impact of programmes as a whole, without looking at the impact of different components. Studies evaluate the short term effects and there is a lack of evidence on the longer term outcomes.

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[1] See http://toolkit.ineesite.org/inee_conflict_sensitive_education_pack

Jäger's (2012) review of peace education programmes also found a scarcity of empirical studies on the impact of peace education programmes, and a lack of studies that looked at the long term impact through the interactions of individual programme beneficiaries and society. The diversity of approaches and programmes in the field presents a challenge for researchers seeking to measure the impact of such programmes. Jäger (2012) cites a study of peace education activities in ten conflict-affected countries. The study identified over 800 activities. At an individual level, the study found that participants in peace education projects were more willing to approach members of other conflict parties and to have confidence in the potential of civil conflict management than members of the control group who were unable to take part in the programmes (Lenhart, Karimi and Schäfer, 2010, cited in Jäger 2012).

The evidence base is currently being added to by research reports and case studies produced through the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) programme, also referred to as Learning for Peace.[2] Through PBEA, UNICEF, the Government of the Netherlands and other partners have worked with governments in 14 conflict-affected states.[3] Under the programme, a conflict analysis was conducted in each country and an educational response was designed based on the findings. In some cases the response included work on the curriculum. A research consortium on education and peacebuilding[4] was also established involving the University of Amsterdam, the University of Sussex, Ulster University and in-country partners, with the aim of *'contributing to the generation and use of evidence and knowledge in policies and programming related to education, conflict and peacebuilding'.* This review draws on some of the evidence produced through PBEA available at the time of writing, including literature reviews on teachers in peacebuilding (Horner et al., 2015) and on youth agency, education and peacebuilding (Lopes Cardozo et al., 2015). Other evidence pieces are due to be published shortly, including a literature review on the integration of peacebuilding and education at the policy level and country reports of the outcomes of PBEA programmes in Pakistan, Myanmar, South Africa and Uganda.

4. Curriculum content: formal education

As noted above, curricula provide a platform that can be used to promote peace or conflict. However, the impact of curriculum content should not be overestimated or considered in isolation of the wider education system. Citing a study of curriculum reform in Sri Lanka, Novelli et al. (2014) point out that reformed curricula emphasising human rights and equal citizenship had very limited impact in contexts where groups continued to experience marginalisation in terms of government allocation of education resources such as teachers, buildings and equipment. It is therefore important that curriculum reform is synergised with other reforms to address inequality of education provision.

It should also be noted that higher levels of formal education, irrespective of overt inclusion of elements for peace building, appear to promote more tolerant, trusting attitudes and increased civil engagement. Findings from the World Values Survey in Latin America and the Arab states showed that people with secondary education were less likely than those with primary education alone to show intolerance of people of different ethnicity, religion and sexuality. Additional years of schooling has a significant effect on the probability of trusting other people and of civic participation (UNESCO 2014a). Therefore any

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[2] http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/about/learning-for-peace/
[3] Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Cote D'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Palestine, Yemen, Pakistan and Myanmar
[4] http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/partners/research-consortium/

analysis of the peacebuilding effects of specific curriculum content needs to consider the impact of this content above and beyond the impact of formal education in general.

With these caveats in mind, this section looks at particular elements of the formal school curriculum that are included/adapted with peacebuilding, either directly or through state building, as one of the explicit aims. This area of curriculum content is sometimes referred to under the umbrella term of *Learning to Live Together* and can include peace education, values and lifeskills education, human rights education, citizenship or civics education and history education reform. In some cases these are taught as a stand-alone subject within the school timetable, in other cases, *Learning to Live Together* themes are mainstreamed throughout the curriculum. A range of these approaches is presented in further detail in a volume on *Learning to Live Together* published by Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict (Sinclair, 2013).

A multi-country[5] review of how *Learning to Live Together* has been integrated into national education policies and curricula in Asia-Pacific is presented in a report by UNESCO (2014b). This report finds that opportunities to study different religions and traditions have helped to promote understanding among students of different religious groups, and that 'carrier' subjects including history, second languages, social sciences, physical education and art are used to teach *Learning to Live Together* competencies. However, the report notes that little attention has been given to the assessment of *Learning to Live Together* competencies.

This paper considers three of the main most common types of curriculum interventions for *Learning to Live Together*: peace education, civics education and history education. Other promising approaches within the school curriculum include the following:

- Human rights education: For example, human rights and child rights education in Liberia has raised young people's awareness of violations and equity (Davies, 2011).

- Ethics education: For example, Arigatou International's intercultural and interfaith ethics education programme has been implemented in schools in five countries, including in conflict affected areas of Kenya and schools hosting refugees in Greece. Preliminary findings from the evaluation indicate that children participating in the programme are able to overcome stereotypes and prejudices, show increased capacity to empathise with others in unjust situations and are better able to find non-violent solutions to problems.[6]

Peace education

Peace education, according to UNICEF, is education that promotes the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values to bring about behaviour change in individuals to prevent violence and conflict, to resolve conflict and to create conditions supportive of peace (Fountain 1999). It is concerned with both content and pedagogy, and it is important that it is taught in a participatory and inclusive way, developing collaboration and mediation skills through groupwork, and ensuring that justice and fairness are reflected in the classroom dynamics (Horner et al., 2015).

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[5] Afghanistan, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, The Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand

[6] Maria Lucia Torres, director, Arigatou International, personal communication. Evaluation reports are due to be published in December 2015

Observational studies show that peace education programmes often have a positive effect on the attitudes and perceptions of learners, even in contexts of ongoing and intractable conflict. Although, as mentioned above, the evidence base is somewhat weak, lacking in counterfactuals and prone to selection bias among participants (Burde et al., 2015).

One of the most well developed, and positively reviewed approaches is the Peace Education Programme. This programme was initially developed by UNHCR in camps for Sudanese and Somali refugees in Kenya. Teaching materials were produced aimed at promoting alternatives to violence as a means to conflict resolution. The material was taught in weekly lessons in schools and in community workshops for out-of-school youth and adults. An evaluation of the programme in the camps found that residents felt that the programme had helped to reduce violence and increase security and that males participating in the programme were less likely to fight. Since then the programme has been developed further through the collaborative efforts of INEE members, and a set of materials published.[7] The programme has been used widely with many other conflict affected communities, both within and outside of camp settings (UNESCO, 2011; Baxter, 2013).

The Peace Education Programme delivers peace education as a separate subject. It includes a number of components including a teacher training programme, with a training manual, community education components and reinforcement through informal education including street drama, posters and sporting events (Baxter, 2013). Evaluations have shown that success (e.g. increased problem-solving skills in relation to local conflicts, falling crime rates, and increased community ownership) was dependent on the interaction between these components, and could not be attributed to a specific activity within the programme (Jäger, 2012).

Another successful programme has been developed and implemented by the organisation, Help the Afghan Children (Sadeed, 2013). Their peace education programme has been implemented in a number of schools throughout Afghanistan and the organisation was chosen by the Ministry of Education to lead the process of including peace education in the national curriculum. Their programme included a number of components including:

- a set of Journey to Peace storybooks in Dari, Pashto and English, for reading, discussing and using as the basis for drama;
- a designated space in schools for teaching and learning about peace;
- a teacher training course; and
- training for local school committees on peace education, in their schools and communities.

Initial results in the schools where the programme was first implemented showed a reduction in observed aggressive behaviour (e.g. bullying, fighting) and an increase in students modelling peaceful positive behaviour, including the development of friendships between different ethnic groups who had previously fought.

Learner appetite for peace education sometimes appears to exceed demand. In their study of the PBEA programme in Uganda, Omoeva and Gale (2015) report that responses to extracurricular peacebuilding activities were overwhelmingly positive. But there was very little peace education taught in schools, despite pockets of conflict resolution content in the national curriculum frameworks.

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[7] http://toolkit.ineesite.org/inee_advocacy_materials_and_peace_education_programme/peace_education_programme

History education

The way that history is presented can be one of the most contentious aspects of the curriculum in conflict affected contexts. History is a subject with the potential for reconciliation as well as being a subject that can drive conflict and sectarian attitudes (Horner et al., 2015). Depending on how it is taught, it can communicate conciliatory values or promote sectarian attitudes. It plays an important role in the formation of individual and community identity (Lopes Cardozo et al., 2015).

The rigorous review by Burde et al. (2015) found that there was limited research on the impact of history education on conflict-affected students and all existing studies were observational and qualitative. Available evidence shows the crucial role that critical engagement with history can play in shaping the identifications, perceptions, and attitudes of learners. These may in turn have potential to contribute to peacebuilding.

In some cases, recent history may be so contentious that authorities opt to avoid teaching it altogether. In Rwanda, history was removed from the school curriculum for many years following the genocide and in Cambodia the history of the 1975-79 genocide was not included in the history curriculum until 2009 (UNESCO 2011).

In her review of approaches to history education in situations of recent and ongoing conflict, Paulson (2015) identifies three promising approaches.

- **Transitional justice**: Using truth commission reports as source material for textbooks: The review identifies examples from Guatemala, South Africa and Peru. However, in Peru it was noted that relying on the truth commission's report as the only source for textbook content about recent conflict promoted a politicised debate about the legitimacy of the truth commission process as a whole.

- **Facing history in ourselves**: Northern Ireland and South Africa: The US-based organisation, Facing History and Ourselves, has worked with education actors in Northern Ireland and South Africa using an approach that enables teachers and students to make connections between history and the moral choices they face in their own lives. Researchers report positively on this work which is particularly valued by teachers as the workshops provide opportunities for teachers to explore their own experiences of conflict.

- **Common textbooks:** Paulson has reviewed a wide range of projects involving the collaborative development of history textbooks by representatives from both sides of historical and ongoing conflicts. The review mentions examples of efforts between nations to develop common history texts, including efforts to develop a Franco-German textbook, a German-Polish textbook, and a Chinese-Japanese-South Korean textbook. In other cases, divided groups within a country have worked to develop a common textbook. For example, the "learn each other's historical narrative" in Israel/ Palestine. This text describes Israeli and Palestinian history in the 20th century from the two conflict parties' different perspectives presented side by side, making it clear that there are different interpretations of the same facts. The book was published in Hebrew and Arabic and is aimed at senior high-school students. But its use was banned by the Israeli and the Palestinian authorities in 2010 (Jäger, 2012). Paulson notes that collaborative textbook projects are difficult and often unsuccessful, but contends that the development processes are potentially reconciliatory in themselves. She notes that such projects now appear to be becoming more common.

Lopes Cardozo et al. (2015) also review the literature on approaches to history education that can promote peacebuilding among youth. Citing evidence of the implementation of programmes such as Facing History and Ourselves in South Africa and history education programmes run by the European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO) in the countries of former Yugoslavia, they conclude that history education which links the study of the past with current issues faced by young people enhances their peacebuilding agency in a range of ways by developing values, attitudes and skills and a concern for ethical values.

However they also note that this approach is rarely used in mainstream curricula which tend to rely on a traditional collective memory approach.

Citizenship education

In their review of the literature on the impact of civics and citizenship education within the secondary school curriculum, Lopes Cardozo et al. (2015) note that there is great potential, in theory, for civics education to promote peacebuilding behaviours and attitudes among youth. However, empirical studies of citizenship education in conflict-affected settings frequently find that the lessons fail to engage young people, and in some cases, when badly delivered, may thwart rather than enhance young people's peacebuilding agency. Citizenship courses were often found to be very abstract and decontextualised, and failed to relate to lived experiences. The review cites studies in Lebanon and Northern Ireland where citizenship education classes were considered by students to be irrelevant as they failed to address key issues that mattered to them. The pedagogical approaches used were found to be too reliant on rote learning with limited space for discussion.

More promising approaches to citizenship education identified in the review include the following:

- Building civic and democratic awareness through youth parliaments in Pakistan and Angola: In these programmes, youth are given opportunities to interact with parliamentarians on youth related issues, and to use local media to develop research and advocacy skills.

- Citizenship classes that draw on students' own experiences and conduct democratic dialogue within the classroom. This approach was observed and studied by Quaynor (2014) in a micro study in one NGO run school in Liberia.

The review finds more evidence of success in non-formal civics education programmes that combine knowledge development, networking opportunities, skills building and opportunities for practical projects, and then mobilise these to build the capacity of young people to exercise citizenship within their local communities. The review cites examples of such programmes from a wide range of contexts including West Bank, Pakistan, Senegal, northern Nigeria, Kosovo and Zimbabwe.

The review concludes that for success, programmes need to be carefully tailored in consultation with young people and their communities since citizenship education is considered most effective in contributing to young people's agency when it responds directly to their situation, priorities, needs and struggles.

In her synthesis of research into education and fragility in four countries, Davies (2011) identifies the civics education curriculum in Liberia, along with teacher support to promote national unity and social cohesion as a promising practice. The civics curriculum, she argues, enhances resistance to political manipulation and promotes a sense of responsible agency.

5. Language of instruction

The choice of language of instruction can be a highly divisive issue in fragile and conflict affected countries. Imposition of a dominant language as the language of instruction may serve to repress or further marginalise speakers of other languages and act as a barrier to learning. In some cases this can lead to resentment that can fuel conflict. Horner et al. (2015) give the example of the Kurdish minority in Turkey who were expected to teach and learn in Turkish and were punished for using Kurdish in schools.

There is a strong technical rationale for the use of mother tongue education in schools, at least in the early years, as this supports the acquisition of basic literacy and can reduce learning disparity between groups (Pinnock, 2009 cited in Horner et al., 2015). However, in multilingual societies there may also be a strong case for using a single language of instruction to promote national unity and shared identity. The 2011 *Education For All Global Monitoring Report* (UNESCO, 2011) compares indicators of national unity in Tanzania, which uses KiSwahili as the medium of instruction at primary schools, with Kenya, which uses mother tongue and English. Tanzanians showed much higher levels of identifying with their nationality over their ethnicity, of trusting other nationals and sense of fair treatment.

Uganda has a mother tongue education policy which aims, in part, to address marginalisation of groups in the North which has led to conflict in the past. However, this policy is perceived very negatively, with the supposed beneficiaries complaining that it exacerbates inequality by limiting their access to education in English (see section below and Omoeva and Gale, 2015).

Sri Lanka's Education for Social Cohesion programme enabled Sinhalese and Tamil speakers to learn in their mother tongues but learners were also taught the other language as a second language in schools, to support the dual national language policy (Davies 2013). However, this option is not always feasible in contexts with multiple languages in the population.

6. Skills development programmes for youth

This report so far has concentrated mainly on formal curricula delivered in schools. Many educational interventions aimed at supporting peacebuilding target out of school youth, including ex-combatants, who may have missed out on formal education due to conflict. This is an important group as they are at high risk of being recruited into armed groups and perpetuating violence, but they also have great potential as peacebuilders. Programmes often aim to equip youth with technical and vocational skills that will increase their (self-) employability, thus providing then with positive livelihood alternatives to joining armed groups. In their review of youth agency and peace building, Lopes Cardonzo et al. (2015) identify a number of promising practices.

- Skills training for ex-combatant youth in Sierra Leone led to real work opportunities and enabled them to participate in community rebuilding, thus facilitating their reintegration.

- Technical and vocational training courses in Liberia included agricultural vocational training, apprenticeship programmes and public works. Many youth who had missed out on education chose vocational training rather than formal education. Programmes targeting ex-combatants provided them with skills to participate in disaster risk reduction and to generate new livelihoods. This helped to facilitate their assimilation into communities.

However, the review notes the lack of rigorous evaluation of the peacebuilding outcomes of technical and vocational training programmes. It also points to the challenge that in many post-conflict societies, employment opportunities available to youth (e.g. in construction and public works) are often limited, short term and low paid. There is a potential danger that technical and vocational education programmes might raise expectations among youth for jobs that cannot be met, which could be a potential driver of conflict.

7. Curriculum development processes

Donor funding and programme sustainability

Curriculum development processes aimed at promoting peace in conflict affected countries are often donor funded, with extensive input from UN agencies and international NGOs in the curriculum and textbook writing processes. Sigsgaard (2012) gives a number of examples including the following:

- In Nepal, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, Save the Children and UNESCO to include education for peace, human rights and citizenship in each year's textbooks as they underwent regular revisions.

- In Sri Lanka, textbooks on life competencies, citizenship and governance were developed through collaboration between the National Institute of Education, Save the Children and others. GIZ has supported teacher trainees from Tamil and Sinhalese groups to engage in joint activities. The World Bank funded the establishment of a 'respect for diversity' textbook review panel.

- In Burundi, the Refugee Education Trust gave expert support to the development of 'Education for Responsible Citizenship' introduced in secondary schools in returnee areas.

As noted by Sinclair (2013), a persistent challenge in the integration of education for peacebuilding into curricula is getting the change to "stick". With many programmes reliant on short term donor aid, sustainability of programmes beyond the project funding lifetime is a major challenge. Education for peace may be a policy priority during or immediately after a conflict, but may become less of a priority as policy makers begin to look beyond the conflict. For example, peace education was introduced into the Solomon Islands around the time of the tensions, but then was left out of the new curriculum when reform to focus on skills and jobs took place (Smith, 2014).

Lopes Cardozo and Hoeks (2015) found that in Sri Lanka, peace education and social cohesion were high on the political agendas before the official ending of the conflict. In 2008 a national policy on education for peace and social cohesion was formulated. The policy included integration of peace education across the curriculum and a bilingual policy according to which Tamil speakers were taught Sinhalese and vice versa. However, the researchers found that the need for a continuous and integral peace education approach seems to be losing political ground in present-day Sri Lanka, and was undermined by the lack of teacher education and by a focus on peace through economic development.

In Timor-Leste, pressure from international donors on the Ministry of Education to implement numerous projects led to a reduction in the national ownership of curriculum reform (Novelli et al., 2014). The Ministry of Education, with weak capacity, was overwhelmed by ungovernable and unpredictable aid flows. As a result of this there was a lack of public consultation on the curriculum. It lacked the necessary

ownership by and legitimacy within civil society, contributing to alienation between the state and its citizens.

Participatory processes

According to the INEE guidance note on conflict sensitive education, "Conflict sensitive curricula reform requires a process that is gradual, participatory, and informed by the conflict analysis" (IIEP, 2013 p29). The INEE Minimum Standards (2010) recommends that textbook review panels must include representatives of different ethnic and other vulnerable groups so as to avoid perpetuating bias and contribute to peace between different communities. Dupuy (2008) also calls for participatory processes in curriculum development. By involving local communities in curriculum development, governments can ensure that different viewpoints and learning needs are represented. It can also increase the legitimacy of a national curriculum among participating groups. Sigsgaard (2012) cites the example of curriculum development in Nepal, where a consultative group was formed, representing Dalits (lowest caste), marginalised communities and institutions for human rights, women and disabilities.

A further example of a participatory model of curriculum development comes from the PBEA programme in Somalia, implemented by the Africa Education Trust (Knezevic and Smith, 2015a). Youth volunteers were recruited and trained to conduct community consultations to feed into the drafting of a new national curriculum framework. In this project, 240 youth participants (44% female) led consultations with 5863 community members. The evaluation noted benefits for the youth themselves, for the communities involved and for the national curriculum. The youth reported that it had helped them to appreciate the diversity of views among stakeholders. The process empowered the youth with a greater sense of agency, and created a space for them to be involved in national decision making. There was a high level of support for the process from community leaders, and community participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to feed into the national curriculum. Recommendations from the consultation are being incorporated into national education curriculum framework. The evaluation notes the potential of this type of process for statebuilding, and argues that the process enabled participants to practice peaceful consensus building:

> 'By using educational curriculum as a 'connector', actors at different levels (including local clans) found agreement on common areas that balanced local, sub-national, and national considerations'. (Knezevic and Smith, 2015a, Executive Summary)

Balancing the local and the national

A persistent challenge noted in the design of conflict sensitive curricula was balancing local needs, knowledge and experience with national development aspirations and statebuilding.

In South Sudan, PBEA, working with the Global Partnership for Education and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), reviewed and revised the lifeskills and peace education curriculum. This has been implemented in 48 schools in 6 counties (Knezevic and Smith, 2015b). Through this programme, conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding was mainstreamed into the national curriculum and the ethos of the Ministry. The authors of the case study note the importance of aligning work to national education policies, but at the same time, use of local knowledge, examples and interpretations were found to be essential components for teaching, and there was a need for local communities to have a sense of ownership of the taught curriculum.

A case study of PBEA in Uganda found that achieving the optimal balance between local, national and global content was problematic (Omoeva and Gale, 2015). Peace education and conflict resolution goals are present throughout the curricular frameworks, with themes and modules in the curriculum which are specifically designed to promote peacebuilding. The national curriculum gradually extends the geographic boundaries of focus as children move through the system, starting with "our home" in the first grade of primary and expanding through community, district, sub-county to nation by grade 5. Beyond this grade students focus on East Africa, the continent and other parts of the world. Whilst the curriculum asks students to reflect on conflict in their local communities, it does not explore the post-independence conflict history of Uganda, or address national issues of ethnicity, other than stressing that all ethnicities deserve respect. The study concludes that limitations on the amount of instructional time combined with resource challenges meant that the curriculum reinforced the existence of multiple narratives and made it difficult to build a shared Ugandan identity.

The policy of using the mother tongue as the language of instruction in the early grades was particularly contentious, with respondents presenting a very negative attitude to it and reporting that it had increased inequality. Respondents in the north explained that the policy gave children in the urban south an unfair advantage in progressing through the education system as they had a head start in studying in English medium, giving them an advantage in the competition for state funded secondary school places. Some minority tribes were further marginalised as there were no teaching or curricular materials available in their languages.

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Key websites

- Learning for Peace, UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy site
  http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/about/learning-for-peace/

- The Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies
  http://www.ineesite.org

- UNESCO's Strengthening Peace and Non-Violence through Education programme
  http://en.unesco.org/cultureofpeace/main-areas-action/peaceducation

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