

Key Takeaways

- Education is the most powerful tool for building peace and must cultivate empathy, dialogue, and nonviolence
- Peace education should be holistic, addressing formal, informal, and non-formal settings while tackling structural and cultural violence
- Value-based education is key to peacebuilding, emphasizing tolerance, social conduct, justice, and intercultural understanding
- Teachers play a critical role in developing peaceful minds and attitudes in students but often lack adequate training in peace education
- Peace is not merely the absence of war but requires active measures including harmony, justice, equality, and respect for human dignity
- Investment in education is associated with higher levels of peace, though better education outcomes correlate with fewer conflicts
- Trauma healing and addressing psychological wounds from conflict are essential prerequisites for effective peace education
- Peace education must begin with personal transformation and expand to encompass all humanity and the Earth community

Discussion Topics

Opening and Technical Setup

florence: Managed technical aspects including interpretation setup and screen sharing

- **Details**
 - **florence:** Provided instructions for accessing interpretation in Spanish, Italian, Polish, and French through the globe symbol or three-dot menu
 - **florence:** Coordinated with interpreters and managed presentation slides throughout the webinar
 - **margaret:** Assisted with technical checks and participant coordination

Introduction and Context

margaret: Welcomed participants and provided background on the webinar theme

- **Details**
 - **margaret:** Explained that the UN NGO Office of the Sacred Heart organizes annual webinars to mark International Day of Education

- margaret: Highlighted global conflicts in Gaza, Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Haiti, and Democratic Republic of Congo as context for discussing peace education
- margaret: Emphasized that escalating geopolitical tensions, climate disasters, forced migrations, and deepening inequalities threaten shared humanity
- margaret: Stated the webinar seeks to reignite conversation around peacebuilding through education

- **Conclusion**

- Education must be the foundation for nurturing inner peace, social harmony, and global solidarity
- The webinar aims to encourage all participants to embrace active roles as peace ambassadors

Opening Peace Song

margaret: Introduced a peace song by mothers from Gaza and Israel

- **Details**

- margaret: Explained that the mothers represent the whole world and all humanity that desires peace
- florence: Played the song featuring messages of peace for children of Israel and Palestine
- The song included multilingual expressions of peace including "Shalom" and "Peace"

Keynote Presentation: Peace Education Foundations

Fr. Joseph Oduor Apollo: Delivered keynote on designing education for peaceful living

- **Details**

- Fr. Apollo: Defined education as complete formation of the person, not just classroom teaching and training
- Fr. Apollo: Stated that education is a long-term investment providing youth with skills to contribute as leaders and peacebuilders
- Fr. Apollo: Explained that quality education manifests in peaceful contexts through good health, avoidance of internal conflict, freedom, spiritual calm, kindness, and compassion
- Fr. Apollo: Noted that better education outcomes are associated with fewer conflicts and greater peacefulness

- Fr. Apollo: Emphasized that countries allocating more resources to education experience greater peace, though exceptions exist
- **Conclusion**
 - Education systems must support learners and impact quality of learning directly and indirectly
 - Investment in education correlates with higher levels of positive peace in countries

Value-Based Education and Dialogue

Fr. Apollo: Discussed the importance of values and dialogue in peace education

- **Details**
 - Fr. Apollo: Stated that value-based education provides not just profession but purpose of life
 - Fr. Apollo: Identified tolerance, social conduct, justice, and intercultural understanding as key dimensions
 - Fr. Apollo: Emphasized that systems instilling courtesy and hospitality principles are essential for peaceful community living
 - Fr. Apollo: Explained that dialogue means conversation as equal partners where people are ready to listen
 - Fr. Apollo: Noted that quality education is a dynamic concept evolving over time, influencing social, economic, and environmental contexts

Defining Peace

Fr. Apollo: Explored positive and negative definitions of peace

- **Details**
 - Fr. Apollo: Explained that peace is not just absence of war, which would be a negative definition
 - Fr. Apollo: Referenced Galtung's work distinguishing negative peace as absence of violence from positive peace
 - Fr. Apollo: Defined positive peace as conditions simultaneously present in community life including harmony, justice, and equality
 - Fr. Apollo: Stated that since war begins in the mind, peace must also be constructed in minds of human beings
 - Fr. Apollo: Noted that many cultures and spiritual traditions have peaceful connotations in the positive sense

Peace Building Process

Fr. Apollo: Outlined the nature and requirements of peace building

- **Details**

- Fr. Apollo: Explained that creating peace means accomplishing freedom, rights, and equality, not just avoiding war
- Fr. Apollo: Identified famine, drought, diseases, inequality, poverty, racism, institutional violence, exploitation, and intolerance as threats to peace
- Fr. Apollo: Stated that peace requires active measures and courage to improve situations regardless of environment
- Fr. Apollo: Defined peace building as transformative process for building sustainable peace by overcoming causes of conflict
- Fr. Apollo: Emphasized that peace building is holistic, involving all communities and individuals
- Fr. Apollo: Referenced the Second African Synod stating Catholic schools are precious resources for learning how to create bonds of peace and harmony

Education in Conflict Settings

Fr. Apollo: Addressed challenges of providing education in conflict-affected areas

- **Details**

- Fr. Apollo: Cited UNESCO study showing 42 percent of world's out-of-school children are in conflict-affected countries, involving about 175 million children
- Fr. Apollo: Noted that by 2011, more out-of-school children lived in conflict zones, showing worsening situation
- Fr. Apollo: Explained that exposure to violence contributes to academic decline, increased problematic behavior, and loss of learning focus
- Fr. Apollo: Stated that conflict causes trauma, deviant behavior, and increased personal problems with long-term academic performance impacts
- Fr. Apollo: Emphasized the need for conducive environment for education in schools as critical for peace building

Peace Education Curriculum

Fr. Apollo: Discussed curriculum design for peace education

- **Details**

- Fr. Apollo: Defined peace education as holistic, multidisciplinary, and transformative process developing competencies for nonviolence
- Fr. Apollo: Stated it is a planning strategy for eliminating conflict and violence caused by injustice, inequality, and human rights violations
- Fr. Apollo: Emphasized that integrating peace education and conflict prevention in planning helps identify areas that may inadvertently contribute to conflict
- Fr. Apollo: Noted that peace education curriculum should be pragmatic and utilitarian while being axiological with integrated values
- Fr. Apollo: Explained that peace and values can be taught through all subjects including mathematics, language, and history
- Fr. Apollo: Listed desired competencies including respect, human rights, social responsibility, rule of law, and democratic attitudes

Role of Teachers in Peace Education

Fr. Apollo: Highlighted the critical role of educators

- **Details**

- Fr. Apollo: Stated that teachers play significant role in peace education and influence minds of children
- Fr. Apollo: Explained that teachers can cure problems of peace by developing peaceful minds in youth through appropriate religious, cultural, and social methods
- Fr. Apollo: Noted that cultural knowledge is predominant precondition to achieve quality life in children
- Fr. Apollo: Stated that teachers can assist children to have less political influence and financial assets to struggle against segregation and injustices
- Fr. Apollo: Revealed that research shows teachers are not adequately prepared to train for peace attitudes since most education programs do not effectively address this theme
- Fr. Apollo: Noted that most teachers and prospective teachers desire peace education incorporated in pre-service training

Human Dignity and Rights

Fr. Apollo: Emphasized respect for human dignity as foundation

- **Details**

- Fr. Apollo: Stated there is growing awareness of exalted respect for dignity proper to human person
- Fr. Apollo: Explained that individuals stand above all created things with universal and invariable rights and duties
- Fr. Apollo: Listed necessities for truly dignified life including food, clothing, shelter, and right to choose state of life
- Fr. Apollo: Emphasized that good education helps overcome limitations in discharging obligations of conscience
- Fr. Apollo: Stated that education of youth from every social background should produce not only talented individuals but great-souled persons required by society

Youth and Peace

Fr. Apollo: Addressed the importance of engaging young people

- **Details**

- Fr. Apollo: Noted that young people often fail to find their concerns, needs, and problems addressed in usual structures
- Fr. Apollo: Stated that adults find it difficult listening patiently to youth and their languages do not match
- Fr. Apollo: Explained that education efforts do not produce expected results for this reason
- Fr. Apollo: Observed that rise of associations and movements made up of young people can be seen as work toward attaining peace
- Fr. Apollo: Emphasized that those interested in dealing with youth should work in solidarity, not isolation, communicating with others engaged in ministry
- Fr. Apollo: Referenced Pope John Paul II stating the church recognizes education as essential dimension of her mission

Education Indicators and Conflict

Fr. Apollo: Concluded with data on education's impact on peace

- **Details**

- Fr. Apollo: Stated that almost all education indicators are associated with shorter internal conflicts
- Fr. Apollo: Explained that better performance in education coincides with less severe levels of societal violence

- Fr. Apollo: Noted that higher primary and secondary education completion rates, particularly for females, are associated with fewer deaths and fewer internal conflicts
- Fr. Apollo: Emphasized that education must always value peace and it must be incorporated in all subjects, not treating peace education in isolation

Personal Journey in Peace Education

Dr. Loreta Navarro Castro: Shared reflections as peace educator from Philippines

- **Details**

- Dr. Castro: Explained her journey began at a seminar on economic equity and ecological integrity where participants imagined preferred futures
- Dr. Castro: Stated she realized she wanted nonviolence, justice, and inclusivity in the world
- Dr. Castro: Explained her motivation comes from faith in Jesus and understanding that foundation of peace is love
- Dr. Castro: Emphasized the need to re-examine own beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors for alignment with peace message
- Dr. Castro: Stated young people search for teachers and adult models with integrity and credibility
- Dr. Castro: Quoted Mahatma Gandhi: "Be the change that you want to see in the world"

Breaking the Cycle of Prejudice

Dr. Castro: Discussed interrupting vicious cycles of discrimination

- **Details**

- Dr. Castro: Presented diagram showing vicious cycle of prejudice prevailing in the world
- Dr. Castro: Explained that people are born with stereotypes and prejudice already in place in society
- Dr. Castro: Stated the need to re-examine ourselves first to avoid reinforcing prejudices
- Dr. Castro: Emphasized the challenge of interrupting the cycle by raising awareness and questioning negative messages
- Dr. Castro: Warned that without intervention, negative messages perpetuate the status quo and discrimination

Expanding Identity

Dr. Castro: Advocated for embracing all humanity

- **Details**

- Dr. Castro: Stated the challenge is expanding identity to embrace all humanity
- Dr. Castro: Emphasized that each person is a human being first and our family extends to the human family and Earth community
- Dr. Castro: Explained this is why we care about Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and share in suffering of all victims of war and oppression
- Dr. Castro: Shared image of girl's t-shirt reading "Birthplace: Earth, Race: Human, Politics: Freedom, Religion: Love"
- Dr. Castro: Quoted astronaut Frank Borman from Apollo 8 mission describing Earth from space with no visible borders or divisions

Holistic Approach in Classroom

Dr. Castro: Outlined comprehensive teaching methodology

- **Details**

- Dr. Castro: Emphasized enabling powerful nexus linking head, heart, and will
- Dr. Castro: Stated the need to engage not only the mind for understanding but also the heart for empathy and concern
- Dr. Castro: Emphasized encouraging the will toward needed actions
- Dr. Castro: Advocated for whole school approach as good organizing framework for peace education
- Dr. Castro: Explained it means integrating peaceful practices and values in all facets of school

Whole School Approach

Dr. Castro: Detailed comprehensive institutional strategy

- **Details**

- Dr. Castro: Presented diagram used at Miriam College showing whole school approach
- Dr. Castro: Acknowledged they are not yet perfectly implementing it but it remains their goal

- Dr. Castro: Explained that whole school approach can more effectively promote culture of peace through coherence
- Dr. Castro: Listed facets including vision and mission, leadership and management style, curriculum and teaching methods, policies and practices, structures and relationships, student programs and activities, and social action with larger society

Societal Peace Building

Dr. Castro: Discussed extending peace education beyond schools

- **Details**

- Dr. Castro: Emphasized promoting peace education in larger society by reaching various sectors, especially strategic groups
- Dr. Castro: Stated the goal is building peace constituency of people who work for peace and justice using love, compassion, respect, and nonviolent methods
- Dr. Castro: Explained the importance of connecting with civil society organizations
- Dr. Castro: Described engaging with government agencies including Commission on Higher Education, Department of Education, and Office of Presidential Advisor on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity
- Dr. Castro: Noted cooperation with government to promote peace processes addressing non-state armed groups like New People's Army
- Dr. Castro: Emphasized supporting and advocating policies to catalyze needed changes and helping in their implementation

Social Transformation Through Peace Education

Dr. Castro: Outlined pathway from education to structural change

- **Details**

- Dr. Castro: Presented diagram showing connection of peace education with desired social transformation
- Dr. Castro: Explained that through peace education, peace constituency is built to push for nonviolent methods like dialogue and negotiation versus violent conflict
- Dr. Castro: Stated process begins with self-transformation but does not end there

- Dr. Castro: Described progression through group transformation via changes in relationships and cultural practices
- Dr. Castro: Emphasized goal is structural change through social and political advocacy
- Dr. Castro: Gave example of recent campaign against senator's bill to make military training compulsory for college students, which was successfully stopped

Practical and Ethical Imperative

Dr. Castro: Justified peace education as necessity and moral duty

- **Details**

- Dr. Castro: Stated peace education is practical necessity to transform current human condition fraught with violence and injustice
- Dr. Castro: Explained it reduces unnecessary human suffering and ensures well-being of people and planet Earth as common home
- Dr. Castro: Described it as ethical imperative upholding value of life and human dignity
- Dr. Castro: Emphasized love as social ethic along with compassion, nonviolence, and justice as norms leading to common good
- Dr. Castro: Contrasted this with culture of domination, power, and self-interest

Nourishing Hope and Courage

Dr. Castro: Addressed sustaining commitment to peace work

- **Details**

- Dr. Castro: Stated the work requires courage to struggle continuously against domination and exploitation at various levels
- Dr. Castro: Acknowledged that peacework is work in progress and challenges do not seem to end
- Dr. Castro: Emphasized need to persevere in journey with hope
- Dr. Castro: Quoted Rubem Alves: "Let us plant dates even though we who plant them will never eat them. We must live by the love of what we will never see"
- Dr. Castro: Stated this is the secret discipline of educators and engaged citizens

- Dr. Castro: Emphasized that while we may not see immediate results, we plant seeds just the same
- Dr. Castro: Shared message: "We cannot force someone to hear a message they are not ready to receive, but we must never underestimate the power of planting a seed"

Six Reflection Points Summary

Dr. Castro: Concluded with actionable framework

- **Details**

- Dr. Castro: Listed six reflection points that should also be action points
- Dr. Castro: Point 1 - Imagine a preferred future
- Dr. Castro: Point 2 - Begin with oneself
- Dr. Castro: Point 3 - Expand one's identity
- Dr. Castro: Point 4 - Take holistic approach in classroom pedagogy, in school through whole school approach, and in engagement beyond school
- Dr. Castro: Point 5 - Educate for peace because it is practical and ethical
- Dr. Castro: Point 6 - Nourish hope and courage in self and in others

Peace Education in Conflict Zones

Maria Biedrawa: Shared experiences from Central African Republic and other conflict areas

- **Details**

- Maria: Explained she works as practitioner spending much time in countries ravaged by armed conflicts where populations have suffered trauma including children and youth
- Maria: Posed question of how to educate for peace when there is crackling of weapons all around
- Maria: Described example of school with children aged 6-8 where sudden noise outside causes children and teachers to disappear under tables to hide
- Maria: Asked how to educate for peace when wounds of war are so deep
- Maria: Described young people aged 15-17 settling conflicts as they saw adults do, with knives and machetes and violence
- Maria: Noted that adults with power who used violence were not punished, so youth imitate them

Healing Wounds of Violence

Maria: Emphasized trauma healing as prerequisite

- **Details**

- Maria: Stated that in their context, working for peace and educating for peace begins with healing wounds of violence
- Maria: Emphasized need to take into account what armed conflicts, especially long-duration ones, have destroyed in human beings and social fabric
- Maria: Stressed importance of going to root of peace education rather than parachuting something that pleases educators more than being useful for children and youth themselves

Four Aspects of Peace Capacity

Maria: Outlined foundational elements for peace education

- **Details**

- Maria: Explained that reflecting with peace actors in several countries including Brazzaville, Central African Republic, and South Sudan, they identified the real issue as understanding what it means to be human
- Maria: Stated they identified roots of human capacity for peace and nonviolent conflict resolution conferred by being made in image of God
- Maria: Listed four aspects that sometimes need healing

Consciousness as Foundation

Maria: Explored multiple dimensions of awareness

- **Details**

- Maria: Explained that in most European languages, the word consciousness is extremely rich with at least three levels
- Maria: First level - Self-consciousness: awareness of where I am, how I am, how I feel, my emotions, my limits, my identity
- Maria: Noted that self-consciousness is in movement and requires models, words, and interiority
- Maria: Stated it is difficult to access interiority when displaced by war in tent with hundreds of other traumatized people
- Maria: Second level - Intellectual consciousness: awareness of facts, truth, what surrounds us, what brought us to where we are

- Maria: Noted intellectual consciousness can be manipulated and altered
- Maria: Stated we see what we want to see and what we are capable of seeing, but also what we are given to see
- Maria: Raised concerns about censored media or no media at all, and impact of social networks with 80 percent false information
- Maria: Asked what is truth when perception is altered by drugs, famine, or extreme poverty
- Maria: Third level - Moral consciousness: forged by self-consciousness and intellectual consciousness
- Maria: Noted that boundaries between good and evil can be blurred in logic of evil for good
- Maria: Gave examples of stealing to survive or prostitution to support family or cross borders
- Maria: Stated moral consciousness influences our notion of justice

Solidarity and Social Bonds

Maria: Addressed importance of rebuilding relationships

- **Details**

- Maria: Explained that one consequence of trauma is that not only does everything explode internally, but social bonds also explode
- Maria: Stated people either lose bonds or are plunged into panic or fear that separates them from others
- Maria: Described shame of not having defended village, city, or someone dear, which also isolates
- Maria: Noted that post-traumatic depression isolates people
- Maria: Stated that in this confinement and isolation, desire for vengeance finds very fertile ground
- Maria: Emphasized that capacity to show solidarity with others is essential pillar
- Maria: Noted that no great figure of nonviolence in last century, including Martin Luther King and Gandhi, would have succeeded without solidarity
- Maria: Stressed need to heal relational wounds and through this strengthen trust and revive capacity to trust

Capacity to Act and Imagine

Maria: Discussed overcoming paralysis from trauma

- **Details**

- Maria: Explained that another direct consequence of trauma is impact on capacity to act
- Maria: Stated that people captive to fear have difficulty imagining world differently or taking initiatives
- Maria: Shared experience from South Sudan with group of young adult leaders from different groups in their diocese
- Maria: Described training on nonviolent action where at end of week, young people said something was missing
- Maria: Quoted youth: "When you talk about justice and peace, we cannot imagine what it is because no one has ever seen it. We young people have never seen it. Our parents have never seen it. Our grandparents have never seen it. There has been war since 1955"
- Maria: Noted youth could describe violence in minute detail but could not imagine peace and justice
- Maria: Explained they worked together to develop examples and create manual for justice and peace work over nearly 10 years
- Maria: Stated the real value was that about 30 young people trained themselves in solidarity, self-awareness, awareness of facts, moral awareness, and imagining world differently

Opening Horizons

Maria: Emphasized importance of hope and alternative vision

- **Details**

- Maria: Stated that all this work opens horizons
- Maria: Explained that recreating bonds, including to oneself, can open possibilities beyond remaining focused on past dramas
- Maria: Clarified this does not mean erasing past but means starting from drama to imagine path of doing things differently
- Maria: Emphasized truly introducing hope into lives
- Maria: Referenced American Mennonite sociologist who worked in Central America and other parts of world on reconciliation processes
- Maria: Quoted that "never again" is not enough

- Maria: Stated it is said after every war and every major accident but writing it on monument is strictly useless without other actions

Gandhi's Wisdom on Nonviolence

Maria: Shared perspective on comprehensive peace work

- **Details**

- Maria: Recalled Gandhi's wisdom that nonviolence consists of 10 percent spectacular actions like salt march and burning British clothes
- Maria: Emphasized that remaining 90 percent are alternative projects including schools, dispensaries, agricultural communities reviving land threatened by drought
- Maria: Described women's groups using what little they have and what they know to create income-generating activities
- Maria: Stated that to qualify as peace education, this path of peace and nonviolence must be inscribed in the mechanism

World Bank Project Example

Maria: Illustrated practical application of peace principles

- **Details**

- Maria: Shared example from Congo Brazzaville where World Bank wanted to invest in creating fountains and clean water sources in region
- Maria: Explained it was very good project and they wanted villagers to manage sources
- Maria: Stated that International Fellowship of Reconciliation members warned World Bank it would not work
- Maria: Explained Congolese said traumatized people would have difficulty working together in community to manage project and it would quickly degenerate
- Maria: Noted World Bank did not want to listen but months later came back asking for help because project was failing
- Maria: Described solution: provided training to each committee on nonviolent conflict resolution and task distribution to recreate solidarity
- Maria: Explained they installed listening point for traumatized women next to fountains and sources

- Maria: Stated women could first recreate what was discussed about consciousness and rebuild their personality, coming with children and later with husbands
- Maria: Concluded this is popular peace education perhaps outside school walls

Closing Reflections

margaret: Provided concluding thoughts and quotations

- **Details**

- margaret: Quoted UN Assistant Secretary General Amina Muhammad from World Social Forum in Doha
- margaret: Stated that true peace is not born of war but from compassion, dialogue, and cooperation
- margaret: Emphasized that peace is not merely absence of war but slow, deliberate work of mending what violence has torn apart
- margaret: Described peace as trust between people, social fabric binding communities, and sense of shared destiny allowing societies to heal
- margaret: Stated peace demands patience, precision, and collective care, requiring resilience from those who choose to mend rather than despair
- margaret: Emphasized that when nations choose understanding over aggression and individuals embrace empathy over indifference, peace becomes sustainable and transformative
- margaret: Called for commitment to empowering learners as architects of peace, starting from within and radiating to families, communities, and world

Vote of Thanks

Rachel: Expressed gratitude to all participants

- **Details**

- Rachel: Thanked everyone for attending the webinar and thanked interpreters
- Rachel: Thanked Fr. Joseph, noting many educators present will continue seeking to educate people with noble souls
- Rachel: Thanked Dr. Loreta, stating participants will try to live loving what they may not see and continue sowing abundantly

- Rachel: Thanked Maria for inviting participants to begin with peace within oneself and create alternative projects together, going to the roots
- Rachel: Noted this connects with interiority dear to Religious of the Sacred Heart
- Rachel: Announced recording will be available in few days on JPIC or RSCJ International website for sharing with others
- margaret: Thanked Rachel for moderating
- margaret: Thanked speakers, translators, and technical team
- florence: Acknowledged thanks for technical support

Action Items

- **Participants**

- Follow up with speakers using their email addresses shared in chat for any additional questions
- Watch the webinar recording when it becomes available on JPIC or RSCJ International website
- Share the recording with others who may benefit from the content
- Introduce themselves in chat and indicate which part of the world they are joining from
- Post questions in question and answer section during webinar

- **Speakers**

- Share email addresses in chat for participant follow-up

- **margaret**

- Coordinate availability of webinar recording on JPIC or RSCJ International website

- **Educators and participants**

- Embrace active role as peace ambassadors
- Implement holistic approach to peace education in classrooms and schools
- Work toward whole school approach integrating peaceful practices in all facets of school life
- Engage with larger society to build peace constituency
- Continue planting seeds of peace even without seeing immediate results

- Begin personal transformation to align beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors with peace message
- Expand identity to embrace all humanity and Earth community
- Nourish hope and courage in self and others