Active Peace Education Toolkit (APE)

Educational materials for peace education and sustainability

peace up

give grow

wonderers COLLECTIVE

youthpeace ambassadors network

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INTRODUCTION

About the toolkit and how it was created

In early 2024, three organisations decided that it was the right time to work together on what matters for them: peace education and education for sustainable development. The main connector of their relationship was their curiosity and constant learning values that the members of these organisations share among each other. In our world, there is a saying that goes: "difference is not a barrier, it's a bridge", and from this saying and common meeting a project to share and co-develop educational materials was born. That idea became the foundation of everything that followed.

This toolkit that you are reading is the outcome of multiple questions, thousands of answers and the in-kind feedback of participants and fellow youth workers. It showcases the co-learning process of the three organisations: **give & grow, Peace Up!** and **Co.Wonders**, that as you will see in a second, come from various educational backgrounds.

The creation of this toolkit united four authors from the above-mentioned organisations, three contributors from the YPA network and 18 youth workers acting as educational evaluators. It also started with the question: How can we use our knowledge and background to fill this gap on materials that combine Peace Education and Education for Sustainable Development? Especially in the moments we are living in, in which conflicts are popping out from everywhere, by the decision of a few, and affecting so many million humans (with their story, their background, their futures...)?

Developing this toolkit was a journey we are grateful to have taken and that used a lot of our energy (and nights), but also gave us multiple stories of humans fighting for a better world. All the workshops you will see here were prepared and tested in a group of youth workers and educators ready to give feedback to make them better. We are thankful to them for all the effort and kind words they shared with us.

You will see that they are also **linked to the SDGs**, this is because we believe they are a roadmap for a more inclusive and peaceful society and environment. They are set to end soon, but what if we think beyond 2030? What kind of world do we want to have?
Further, this toolkit is also **connected to the YPAN Competence Framework**. This is because we believe that fostering a culture of peace requires understanding of key concepts and developing the competencies needed to put them into practice. The activities, reflections, and learning resources in this toolkit are therefore designed to strengthen the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes outlined in the framework.

Welcome to our APE toolkit that started from the curiosity of three organisations to end up in your hands. We really hope this brings new aha! moments to your training, community meetings, lunch gatherings or even informal meetings.

Our first question we leave you with is:

What bridge are you ready to build?

About APE project and why the toolkit was created

This toolkit is part of the "Active Peace Education" project, born from a gap we found in our conversations: many educational programmes focus on either sustainability or peace, but rarely both.

We came to the conclusion that the peace education which we deliver, cannot exist in a vacuum and needs to be seen as part of a bigger picture of changing societal structures. Our answer is to bring these two fields together, creating something that works towards the well-being of people, the planet, all living beings and with a special look to the young people.

This toolkit takes the conflict-sensitive approach as a guideline for the education on sustainable development and peace. This approach is needed in all the activities and works we do, as it aims to build a sustainable (or let's call it long term) impact in which people can see the benefits of cooperating and creating spaces of learning and development.

The APE project was structured around three pillars:

- the co-learning and co-creation of this toolkit;
- an international training called "Peace meets sustainability", designed to test and adapt the toolkit with the input of 18 youth trainers and educators;
- a series of local actions that included an awareness campaign about the link of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Peace Education (PE) and two local workshops: one in Spain and one in Germany.

Finally, once the toolkit was created, it was tested by 18 individual youth workers and educators that provided extra feedback and got included in the final design. For the results of the local workshops and the awareness campaign, you can check the articles written by the partners and YPA network.

About Youth Peace Ambassadors Network (YPAN)

Youth Peace Ambassadors Network or YPAN is a growing network of youth peacebuilders and activists. We want to develop a culture of peace in which we protect human rights, dignity, equality and respect for diversity. We strive to achieve this by empowering youth through education, advocacy, and other non-violent actions, which we deliver through projects at the local and international level.

We ask ourselves one question:
With whom have you made peace today?

And we answer it with four pillars of work:

- empowering youth.
- building peace especially in conflict-affected communities
- addressing human rights issues
- developing our network as a platform for like-minded individuals and organisations

We have been running human rights and peace education projects since 2012. Today we have trained more than 3,500 young people from all over the world by creating safe spaces for conversations and designing and implementing actions and collaborations.

YPAN was awarded the 2022 Shalom Prize of the University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (KU) for its "works towards advancing peace and justice through education and advocacy". You can join the activities and follow the stories of the network on its social media.

About the organisations behind creation of this toolkit

Peace Up!
Peace Up! promotes and organises spaces dedicated to peace education, non-violent conflict transformation, and reconciliation through workshops, training courses, educational resources, and international learning opportunities. Our mission is to empower young people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to contribute to more peaceful, inclusive, and just societies. Through learning opportunities, dialogue, intercultural exchange, and active participation, we encourage young people to explore topics such as peacebuilding, nonviolence, conflict transformation, and reconciliation. These spaces support meaningful connections, critical reflection, and collaborative learning. By strengthening understanding, cooperation, and active citizenship, Peace Up! aims to support young people in becoming changemakers who contribute to positive, peaceful social change in their communities and beyond.

give & grow

give & grow
give & grow provides access to travel education in the form of workshops and online courses, promoting sustainability and intercultural understanding to enhance global dialogue. Our mission is to create spaces that focus on genuine connections and global justice, supporting a peaceful society and encouraging dialogue. Coming from the perspective of Education for Sustainable Development, we promote intercultural understanding and global impact while building a bridge to peace education to empower young people.

wonderers
COLLECTIVE

Co.Wonders
Wonderers Collective (Co.Wonders) aims to design spaces to explore the full potential of people. We do it by providing training and educational experiences around communication, community-building and creativity. We believe that when people feel connected, heard and empowered, they can create stronger projects and communities, building a more collaborative and sustainable future.

How to use the toolkit and for whom it is?

This toolkit is designed for youth workers, trainers, educators, facilitators, and other adult learning practitioners. While many of the activities can be adapted for different age groups, the toolkit was developed primarily for youth work and adult learning settings.

It is intended for anyone interested in exploring the connections between peace education, education for sustainable development (ESD), environmental peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity. Whether you are already working with these topics or are just beginning to explore them, this toolkit can serve as a practical starting point for learning, reflection, and action.

Think of this toolkit as a place to explore, learn, and find inspiration. Each chapter offers:

- **a theoretical overview** that introduces key concepts, explains how they connect to one another, and offers guidance for further reading and exploration;
- **a selection of activities** based on non-formal education methods. These activities can be used and adapted in a variety of educational settings, including youth exchanges, training courses, workshops, community projects, and other learning environments. They are designed to help participants engage with topics such as peace education, sustainable development, environmental peacebuilding, and conflict sensitivity in an interactive and meaningful way;
- **a practical checklist** which can help you reflect on and assess whether your activities and educational approaches are aligned with the principles of peace education, education for sustainable development, environmental peacebuilding, and conflict sensitivity.

Peace education: concept

Peace education: concept

Peace as a point of departure

Peace education begins with understanding of peace. And peace can be defined as:

- **the absence/reduction of violence of all kinds** (this definition is violence oriented as peace is portrayed as its negation)
- **nonviolent and creative conflict transformation** (this perspective is about the dynamic process of reducing violence and transforming relationships, systems, and cultures through nonviolent means).

Following this understanding of peace (by Johan Galtung), it is important to mention:

- peace work is the effort to reduce violence through peaceful means;
- peace studies is the study of the causes of violence and the conditions necessary for peacebuilding.

Like health studies, peace studies do not seek unrealistic triumphs or the total elimination of all suffering, but better deals, with less suffering, from violence as from disease. So peace studies require violence studies, because if violence is the problem, then peace is the solution. Violent actions can be then addressed with peace research, education and action. In this scheme, the forms of violence could be addressed with forms of peace, like:

direct violence:
- survival of the fittest
- war geography
- history and future of violence

direct peace:
- mutual aid and cooperation
- peace movement, alternative defence
- history and future of peace

structural violence:
- ecocide
- patriarchy, racism, class
- cultural imperialism

structural peace:
- non-homocentric eco-peace
- development, parity, equity
- cultural coexistence

cultural violence:
- language: sexist, racist
- media: war journalism
- school: militarisation

cultural peace:
- language: humanist/non-speciesist
- media: peace journalism
- school: peace education

source: Systematization of Peace and Conflict Studies by J. Galtung in "Peace by Peaceful Means"

Peace education with regard to this scheme could be seen as a transformative educational process that seeks both: the cure of existing violence, and the prevention of future violence. At its core, peace education aims to transform a culture of violence into a culture of peace.

Understanding violence

To address violence is crucial to understand it. According to J. Galtung violence means harming and/or hurting. Violence is not limited to physical harm or war. J. Galtung distinguishes various forms of violence. In simplified way they can be distinguished as:

- **direct violence:** is the one that can often be seen with the "naked eye". It can be divided into verbal and physical, and harms the body, mind or spirit (examples could be: war, physical assault, domestic abuse, verbal violence).

- **structural violence:** it is violence frozen in structures, or in other words: built into a person, social and world spaces. It divides into political, repressive and economic, exploitative (examples could be: poverty, hunger, global inequality, economic systems which exploit vulnerable populations).

- **cultural violence:** is symbolic and divided by content: religion, law and ideology, language, art, science, cosmology and by carriers: media, schools, universities. Its function is to legitimize direct and structural violence, motivating actors to commit direct violence or omit counteracting structural violence (examples could be: discrimination, dehumanisation, enemy images).

According to Galtung, the major direction of violence is: from cultural violence, through structural violence, into direct violence. This means that harmful beliefs and ideologies often create unjust systems, which then lead to visible conflict and suffering.

Explore more: nature violence (originating in nature, including the human body, unintended) and time violence (negative impacts on future generations).

Where do we find the key carriers of violence?

Who are the carriers of peace strategies?

Understanding peace

To dismantle violent structures - there is a need to build a culture of peace. And just as violence can exist in various forms, peace must also be built at various levels. So let's look closer at the framework explaining the dimensions of peace based on the idea of J. Galtung.

- **Negative peace**, simply explained, is the absence of direct violence.

- **Positive peace** is the absence of violence of all kinds and creation of structures in which the following dimensions are present:

  - direct positive peace: peaceful relationships, verbal and physical kindness, care to the body, mind and spirit of self and other, addressed needs, survival, well-being, freedom and identity.

  - structural positive peace: freedom instead of repression, equity instead of exploitation, dialogue instead of penetration, integration instead of segmentation, solidarity instead of fragmentation, participation instead of marginalisation.

  - cultural positive peace: legitimation of peace would replace legitimation of violence, development and support of human abilities and potential instead of repressing them.

Explore more: nature peace: species cooperation, not struggle, and time peace: sustainable actions for future generations.

Positive peace cannot be achieved only by stopping war or violence. The alternative, peaceful structures must be present. And peace education opens the way for many directions of inquiry into how peaceful structures can be developed.

What is peace education?

Peace education (PE) is a broad and flexible framework rather than a single model. It includes many interpretations of peace, shaped by cultural, historical, and social contexts. Objectives of peace education are directed toward the elimination of violence in all its various forms and manifestations, and the nurturing and establishment of the conditions necessary for peace to flourish. Peace education empowers people to think critically, communicate effectively, and act responsibly in their relationships and societies.

Peace education is learning both "about peace" and "for peace". It promotes knowledge about the requirements of, the obstacles to, and the possibilities for achieving and maintaining peace. It supports the development of skills, capacities, attitudes and values necessary to prevent violence, to resolve and transform conflict, and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.

definition by: UNESCO. (2024). Peace education in the 21st century: An essential strategy for building lasting peace.

In the mentioned above document, UNESCO (2024) provides a list of diverse approaches to PE, highlighting that Peace Education functions as an umbrella term. The transformative goals of peace education involve the following dimensions: personal, relational, political, structural, cultural and ecological.

Peace education is about development of skills, knowledge, imagination, compassion and perseverance to:

- reduce direct violence and build peaceful relations (direct positive peace)
- transform unjust structures (structural positive peace)
- change cultural beliefs that legitimize violence into the ones which legitimize peace (cultural positive peace).

In peace education, learners are encouraged to examine the causes, conditions, and contexts of violence across different spaces:

- nature
- person
- society
- world (global systems)
- culture
- time (history).

Rather than accepting militarisation and violence as inevitable, peace education opens pathways toward alternative futures rooted in nonviolence, sustainability, justice, and solidarity.

"Since wars begin in the minds of people, it is in the minds of people that the defences of peace must be constructed."

UNESCO Constitution (1945)

The idea of education promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship was also supported by the United Nations (1948) through article 26. of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the

Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (1999), the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (2015) and UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development (2023).

The academic foundation of peace education was developed inter alia by Johan Galtung, who distinguished between negative peace (the absence of direct violence) and positive peace (absence of violence of all kinds and the presence of justice, equality, and well-functioning social systems).
Betty Reardon's view on peace education was connected with helping learners critically understand the causes of violence, war, oppression, and inequality while empowering them to become active participants in social transformation. Reardon viewed peace education as both a political and ethical project that develops critical consciousness, global responsibility, and human solidarity. For her, peace education should cultivate the capacity to imagine and create alternative futures grounded in justice, equality, and nonviolence.

"The general purpose of peace education, as I understand it, is to promote the development of an authentic planetary consciousness that will enable us to function as global citizens and to transform the present human condition by changing the social structures and the patterns of thought that have created it. This transformational imperative must, in my view, be at the center of peace education."

definition by: B.Reardon (1988).
Comprehensive peace education: Educating for global responsibility

Holistic framework of peace education, was developed by Toh Swee-Hin and Virginia Cawagas (2002), in response to the multiple realities of peoples in the South and North, of threats and consequences of direct physical violence, as well as indirect and structural forms of violence.

Pedagogy of peace education

Pedagogically, peace education seeks to model a pedagogy that is consistent with the values and principles of peace (Jenkins, 2019). In the tradition of Paulo Freire (2017), peace education pedagogy is typically learner-centered, seeking to draw forth knowledge from the learner's reflection on experience rather than impose knowledge through a process of indoctrination or memorising facts. Learning and development occur, not from experience as such, but from reflective experience. Learners are invited to question dominant systems, analyse root causes of conflict, tolerate complexity and ambiguity, and develop the skills necessary for conflict transformation and nonviolent action. J. Galtung and S.P. Udayakumar (2013) proposed for peace education to insist on being and becoming what we teach (instead of on teaching peace and development). On the other hand, Toh Swee-Hin and Virginia Floresca Cawagas mentioned key pedagogical principles of educating for peace, as encompassing: holism, dialogue, values formation, and critical empowerment or conscientisation.

Peace education as a way of transforming culture

Peace education seeks to transform cultures and systems of violence into cultures and systems of peace. It is education preparing people to become active peacebuilders in their everyday lives and societies.

This involves:

- challenging ideologies that normalise violence
- promoting justice, empathy, and cooperation
- creating equitable social structures
- encouraging dialogue and reconciliation
- building nonviolent ways of addressing conflict.

Peace education aims to move societies away from *"bellum omnium contra omnes"* (war of all against all) and toward *"pax omnium cum omnibus"* (peace of all with all) by teaching empathy, dialogue, justice, and non-violent conflict resolution.

Flower of peace education (key concepts)

"Holistic Framework of Peace Education" by Toh Swee-Hin and Virginia Floresca Cawagas describes principles of peace education through a metaphor of flower and its petals being a living, interconnected system.

The framework identifies six inter-related dimensions and themes of issues and problems that underpin violence and conflicts namely:

- **educating for dismantling a culture of war:** the framework opposes militarisation, armed conflict, and all forms of violence. It promotes nonviolence, conflict resolution, disarmament, and peaceful problem-solving at both global and personal levels.
- **educating for living with justice and compassion:** it focuses on overcoming poverty, inequality, and social injustice. It teaches that peace cannot exist where there is exploitation, discrimination, or economic oppression. Learners are encouraged to support fairness, human dignity, and global justice.
- **educating for promoting human rights and responsibilities:** peace education emphasises the protection of human rights for all people, including women, children, refugees, and indigenous communities. At the same time, individuals are taught to act responsibly in respecting the rights of others.

- **educating for building cultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity:** it encourages understanding and respect among different cultures, religions, and ethnic groups. It challenges racism, prejudice, and discrimination while promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence.

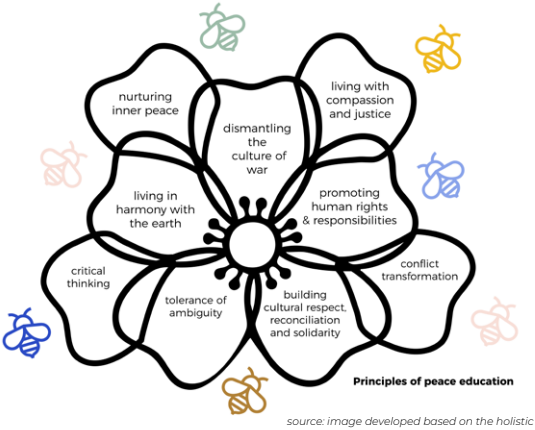
- **educating for living in harmony with the earth:** it connects peace with environmental sustainability. It teaches that ecological destruction, overconsumption, and exploitation of natural resources threaten both humanity and the planet. Sustainable lifestyles and care for nature are therefore essential for peace.

- **educating for cultivating inner peace:** it highlights the importance of spiritual well-being, self-awareness, and emotional balance. Inner peace helps individuals overcome fear, anger, greed, and despair, allowing them to contribute positively to society and the environment.

Building on the original model, and willing to contribute to it based on the experience of the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network, we would like to propose additional elements:

- three new petals:
  critical thinking: it focuses on learners' capacity to critically examine social realities
  tolerance of ambiguity: it shows how to navigate complexity and uncertainty
  conflict transformation: as a skill to engage constructively in transformative, nonviolent conflict processes, and transform conflicts through dialogue, reconciliation, mutual understanding and creation of new social relationships (with change of people, relations and structures).
- bees: the symbol of peacebuilders being carriers of peace strategies

Explore more: One of the suggestions during the "Peace meets sustainability" training course and testing, was to add the petal of "dismantle the culture of dualism". Would you agree? Would you add any other petal?



source: image developed based on the holistic framework of peace education by Toh Swee-Hin and Virginia Cawagas

International documents and frameworks

Peace education is regulated in a range of international declarations, frameworks, and policy documents, emphasising that human rights, equality, nonviolence and democratic participation are key foundations of peacebuilding.

- ***Constitution of UNESCO (1945)***

  The Constitution of the UNESCO establishes the foundational idea that peace must be built through education. It states that "since wars begin in the minds of people, it is in the minds of people that the defences of peace must be constructed." This makes education a central tool for preventing war by promoting understanding, dialogue, and cooperation among peoples.

- ***Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (1999)***

  The UN's (1999) Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace led to the Declaration of the International Decade for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace and NonViolence (2001–2010), shifted the prevailing concepts of peace as 'the absence of war' to 'cultures of peace'. It also called for education at all levels to promote peace, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, and nonviolence, emphasising that learning must help transform values, attitudes, and behaviors away from violence and toward peaceful coexistence.

- ***SGDs (2015)***

  The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (2015) highlighted particularly the importance of education in fostering global citizenship, human rights, and a culture of peace. Goal 4.7 calls for education that promotes a culture of peace, nonviolence, and global citizenship, while Goal 16 links education to building peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. Together, they position peace education as essential for achieving sustainable development.

- ***UNESCO Global Citizenship Education (GCED) Framework (2015)***

  The Global Citizenship Education framework strongly aligns with peace education by promoting global understanding, respect for diversity, and active engagement in creating a more peaceful world. It encourages learners to develop values, skills, and attitudes that support nonviolence, cooperation, and responsibility at local, national, and global levels.

- ***Declaration on the Right to Peace (UN 2016)***

  The United Nations Declaration on the Right to Peace reinforces the idea that "everyone has the right to enjoy peace such that all human rights are promoted and protected and development is fully realised." It portrays the idea that peace is both a goal and a human right. It supports the idea behind peace education by affirming that individuals and societies must be educated and empowered to understand peace as a condition necessary for all human rights and human development.

- ***UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development (2023)***

  The 2023 Recommendation of UNESCO positions peace education as a core function of modern education systems. It integrates peace education with human rights and sustainable development, calling for learners to develop competencies such as critical thinking, empathy, and conflict transformation in order to build peaceful, just, and sustainable societies.

- ***Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe - Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)11 on peace education by, with and for young People (2026)***

  The 2026 Recommendation of the CoE establishes peace education as a lifelong, participatory process that should be developed by, with and for young people. It mentions one of the core purposes of peace education: facilitating transitions away from cultures of war and violence and towards cultures of peace and non-violence. It promotes peace education as a means of strengthening democratic culture, human rights, social cohesion, and active citizenship by equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed to prevent violence, transform conflicts peacefully, counter discrimination and hate speech, foster intercultural dialogue, and contribute actively to peaceful, inclusive, and resilient societies.

- ***Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – Resolution 2378 (2021)***

  The Council of Europe Resolution 2378 highlights peace education indirectly by emphasising youth participation in conflict prevention and resolution. It supports inclusion of peace education in the formal school curriculum, with focus on teaching about relationships and team working, empathy, critical thinking, media literacy, conflict transformation, reconciliation, human rights education, peaceful political participation and intercultural dialogue, so that young people may be better equipped to understand the root causes of violence, support peace and ensure respect for diversity in multicultural societies.

- ***Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda (UNSC Resolutions 2250, 2419, 2535)***

  The United Nations Security Council Youth, Peace and Security agenda reinforces peace education by recognising the role of education and capacity-building in enabling youth to participate in peace processes. It promotes the idea that young people should be equipped with knowledge, skills, and opportunities to prevent violence and contribute to sustainable peace.

- ***Earth Charter (2000)***

  Another significant framework connected to peace education is the Earth Charter International. Launched in 2000 after a broad international consultation process, the Earth Charter serves as a global ethical framework for building a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. Although not legally binding, it provides important moral and educational guidance by emphasizing the interconnectedness of environmental sustainability, social justice, human dignity, democracy, and nonviolence.
  The Earth Charter is organised around four central pillars: respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, social and economic justice, and democracy, nonviolence, and peace. These principles closely align with the aims of peace education by promoting responsibility, solidarity, intercultural respect, and sustainable ways of living. In this sense, the Earth Charter broadens the understanding of peace beyond the absence of war and presents peace as deeply connected to ecological balance, justice, and global cooperation.

Stakeholders

Peace education is a collective and transformative process that requires the active participation of multiple stakeholders at local, national, and global levels. Building a culture of peace cannot be achieved by educational institutions alone; rather, it depends on cooperation among governments, civil society organisations, communities, educators, and individuals who together contribute to promoting justice, dialogue, human rights, and nonviolence.

- **EDUCATIONAL ACTORS**

  Educational institutions, including schools, universities, and non-formal learning spaces, play a central role in peace education by integrating peace-related themes into curricula and pedagogical practices. These institutions help learners develop critical thinking, empathy, intercultural understanding, and conflict transformation skills while also creating safe and inclusive environments where democratic participation and respect for diversity can flourish.

- **POLICY MAKERS**

  Governments and policy makers are equally important stakeholders, as they shape educational systems through legislation, curriculum development, funding, and national strategies. Their support is essential for institutionalizing peace education and ensuring that it becomes part of long-term educational and social development policies. International frameworks developed by organisations such as UNESCO and the United Nations further encourage governments to integrate peace education into national education systems.

- **NGOs**

  Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations often serve as innovators and facilitators in the field of peace education. Particularly in contexts affected by violence, inequality, displacement, or social exclusion, NGOs provide workshops, training programs, youth exchanges, awareness campaigns, and community-based peacebuilding initiatives. They frequently act as bridges between formal education systems and local communities, helping to translate peace education principles into practical action.

- **LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

  Local communities, families, youth groups, religious leaders, and individuals also play a fundamental role. Peace education extends beyond classrooms into everyday life, where values such as empathy, respect, cooperation, and nonviolent communication are practiced through daily interactions. Communities contribute to building cultures of peace by fostering inclusive dialogue, supporting reconciliation, and encouraging active civic participation.

- **MOVEMENTS**

  An important global stakeholder in this field is the Global Campaign for Peace Education (GCPE), an international network of peace educators, universities, schools, NGOs, and governmental partners dedicated to advancing peace education worldwide. The GCPE works to disseminate peace education practices across diverse contexts while encouraging transnational cooperation in response to global threats to peace. Through advocacy, networking, and resource-sharing, the campaign supports the development of cultures of peace at both local and international levels.

Peace education is not limited to a single institution or discipline. It is a shared social responsibility that involves formal education systems, public institutions, civil society, and everyday human relationships working collectively toward cultures of peace, sustainability, and democratic coexistence.

Challenges

It is worth mentioning also significant challenges in implementing peace education. These include insufficient policy support, limited funding, and weak integration into national curricula, where peace education is sometimes treated as an optional or secondary topic. At the classroom level, challenges involve lack of teacher training, inadequate resources, and difficulties in moving from traditional teaching methods to more transformative, participatory approaches. There is also concern that poorly designed curricula may present peace in overly abstract or based on fear ways, which can reduce student engagement or create feelings of hopelessness.

Why promote peace education?

Promoting peace education means understanding peace not only as the absence of war, but as a daily practice reflected in thoughts, relationships, institutions, and ways of living. Peace education, education for sustainable development (ESD), and the Earth Charter all share the vision that building peaceful societies requires nonviolence, human rights, social justice, ecological sustainability, respect for diversity, and responsibility toward future generations.

Peace as a lifestyle begins with individuals. Practicing empathy, dialogue, respect, and nonviolent communication improves emotional well-being, strengthens relationships, and helps people respond constructively to conflict and uncertainty. At the community level, these everyday practices contribute to more inclusive, supportive, and democratic societies.

Promoting peace also has global significance. It supports cooperation, reduces violence and discrimination, and helps address major global challenges such as inequality, environmental destruction, and climate change. In this sense, peace education empowers people to become active peacebuilders and “carriers of peace strategies” capable of transforming society through both personal action and collective responsibility.

Transformative peace education connects knowledge with lived experience, critical reflection, and social engagement. Closely linked with Human Rights Education, Global Citizenship Education, and Education for Sustainable Development, it encourages learners to develop the skills and values necessary for building sustainable, just, and peaceful futures. Ultimately, promoting peace as a lifestyle is essential for creating compassionate communities and long-term global sustainability.

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Swee-Hin, T., & Cawagas, V. *Peace education, ESD and the Earth Charter: Interconnections and synergies.*

UNESCO. (2024). *Peace education in the 21st century: An essential strategy for building lasting peace.* **SAGE.**

Peace education:
activities

Introduction to peace education

1. General information:

- **Thematic:** violence, peace, culture of peace and basics of peace education
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to introduce participants to the concept of peace education (PE)
  - to explore how PE is defined in international frameworks
  - to understand the triangle of violence, and to address it with the triangle of peace
  - to reflect on what learning is crucial to develop a culture of peace.
- **Number of participants:** any group size
- **Time:** 120 min
- **Materials:**
  - prepared triangle of violence and peace on flipchart or pieces of papers
  - prepared statements for thermometer on peace

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Key Concepts of Peace Education
- Planning the Educational Process

2. Short description

This session introduces the concept of peace education and its foundations in international frameworks. Participants will explore Johan Galtung's triangle of violence and peace, linking theory to examples from their everyday life. The session ends by connecting learnings from it with reflection over learnings needed to develop a culture of peace in everyday practice and youth work.

3. Preparation

• Read the chapter of the toolkit about "Peace Education: concept", so that you are familiar with the concept of violence, peace and peace education principles and international frameworks.
• Prepare the triangle of violence and peace on flipchart or pieces of papers.

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction and brainstorming (10 min)
Introduce the aim of the session and the agenda.
Ask participants to share with their neighbour (in couples) what comes to their mind when you say: "peace education"?
After warm up sharing in couples
- gather 4-5 voices in the plenary.
Ask with which other terms they associate peace education and note it down on the "parking lot" flipchart.

Step 2: Map experiences with peace education (10 min)
Open space within the group to map their experience with peace education. You can do so, by dividing participants into 4 working groups where they can discuss with each other one of the questions and then briefly report in the plenary:

- **group 1:** if any of the participants had a chance to learn about peace education in their formal education path?
- **group 2:** when did you hear about peace education for the first time?
- **group 3:** what are the spaces in which we are educated about peace;
- **group 4:** who is responsible for organising peace education.

Step 3: Thermometer of statements around peace (10 min)
Introduce to participants various statements about peace and peace education and invite them to position themselves on a scale being a thermometer with 0˚C (meaning this sentence does not resonate with me) to 100˚C (meaning I very much agree).
Alternatively, put the papers with those sentences written down in various parts of the room and ask participants to stand close to the sentence which reflects on what they concentrate their effort in their peacebuilding work (or where they find it important to concentrate the efforts).

You can adapt the statements to the learning needs of the participants:

- Peace is the absence/reduction of violence of all kinds.
- Peace is nonviolent and creative conflict transformation (including transforming relationships).
- Peace studies is the study of the causes of violence and the conditions necessary for peacebuilding.
- Peace education is a way to transform culture.
- Peace work is the effort to reduce violence through peaceful means.
- Violent actions can be addressed with peace research, education, action.
- Peace studies is like health studies. They do not seek unrealistic triumphs or the total elimination of all suffering, but better deals, with less suffering, from violence as from disease.

Step 4: Understanding violence: introduction to triangle of violence (15 min)

Start with the inspiration by J. Galtung that creating peace has to do with reducing violence (cure) and avoiding violence (prevention). Explain that to reduce or avoid violence there needs to be an understanding of what violence is.

Present the triangle of violence and fill it in (together with participants) with examples provided from everyday life. You can provide the examples or you can ask participants to give examples (or both).

Check the chapter on “Peace Education: concept” for the forms of violence explanation.

Step 5: Understanding peace: introduction to triangle of peace (15 min)
As a starting point you can ask participants what peace means to them and use some of the peace definitions in the chapter on "Peace Education: concept".

Use the invitation to treat peace education as a way of transforming the culture and ask:

- what could be the ways to transform the culture of violence into a culture of peace?
- what would be alternatives to the elements of the triangle of violence?

Present the dimensions of peace (from chapter "Peace Education: concept") and explain the possible ways of peacebuilding.

Step 6: Group work: towards culture of peace (20 min)
Divide participants into 3 groups and ask them to prepare a flipchart with ideas answering to the question:

About what do we need to educate to build structures for peace:
- at a direct peace level? (group 1)
- at a cultural peace level? (group 2)
- at a structural peace level? (group 3)

In other words: what do we need to know about, know how to do, and which attitude we need to add to the development of the culture of peace at those levels?

If there is time, you can add one more question which could sound as:
- what do we need to be careful about when we organise peace education?

Step 7: Group presentations (10 min)
Ask each of the groups to present the outcomes of their work and build collective understanding and ideas for the culture of peace.

Step 8: Input: concepts of peace education and frameworks (15 min)
Present the concept of peace education (included in chapter "Peace Education: concept" of this toolkit), with the key note that peace education is the process of learning skills, attitudes, and knowledge to prevent violence and build cooperation.
You can connect peace education to the international frameworks of human rights education, UNESCO culture of peace, SDGs and the Council of Europe international documents and toolkits in the field of youth work.

Step 9: Debriefing (15 min)
Ask participants to reflect over their experience and learning at this session by asking the questions:

- How are you feeling?
- What surprised you in the learnings of this session?
- Which level (direct, structural, cultural) of violence is most difficult to change?
- At which level (direct, structural, cultural) is the hardest to build structures for peace?
- What are the challenges to peace education today?
- What role can you play in promoting peace and peace education?
- How is peace education linked to SDGs?

5. Advice & notes:

- When preparing the session, define for yourself in which direction you would like to go as a facilitator and what would be the key learnings you want the participants to take away.

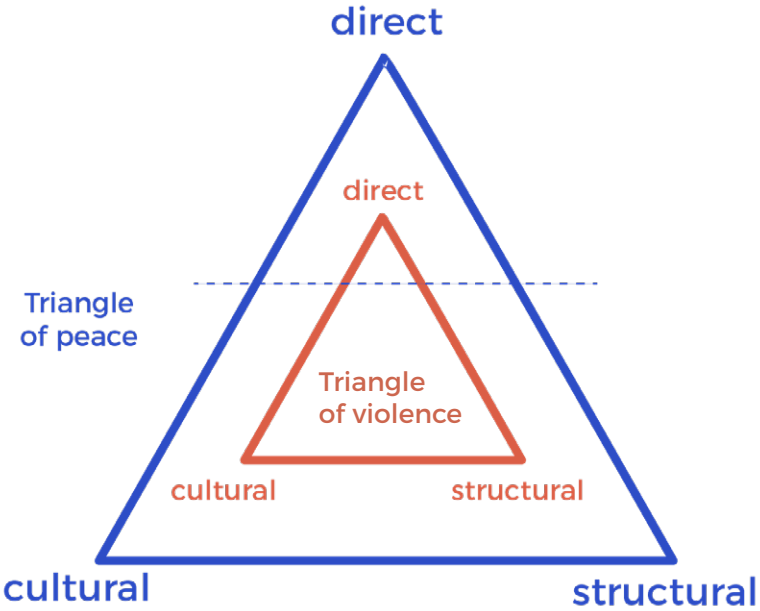
  Possible directions:
  • peace is a process;
  • education plays a key role in transforming the culture of violence into understanding and cooperation.

- When preparing the triangle of peace and violence use color coding and various shapes, to make the visualisation clear.

6. Further information & materials

When preparing the session check in chapter "Peace Education: concept", particularly the part about: peace as a part of departure (table), understanding violence (forms of violence) and understanding peace (dimensions of positive peace). Prepare the pieces of papers with examples to each of those forms (ready to be placed at specific places of the triangles below).

For example:
• physical violence and survival of the fittest (to be placed at direct part of triangle of violence)
• global inequality (to be placed at structural part of triangle of violence)
• mutual aid and cooperation (to be placed at direct part of triangle of peace)
• media: peace journalism (to be placed at cultural part of triangle of peace)



** triangle based on the concept described by J. Galtung*

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Agata Stajer

Read more:

• Galtung, Johan; (1996); "Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization". Sage Publications.
• Book of Peace Design by Youth Peace Ambassadors Network

Petals of peace education

1. General information:

- **Thematic:** basics of peace education, its values and principles
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to explore principles of peace education
  - to reflect on participants' values and principles and their presence in peace education and youth work
- **Number of participants:** any group size
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:**
  - prepared flower petal model of peace education
  - sticky notes, pens
  - wall or a blackboard
  - flipchart and enough space for group work.

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Key Concepts of Peace Education
- Planning the Educational Process

2. Short description

This session helps participants distinguish between values and principles and identify key peace education principles by reflecting on and analysing practical methods. Through group work and discussion, participants will connect concrete activities to the main principles that guide effective and conflict-sensitive peace education.

3. Preparation

Before starting the session, prepare the flower petal model on a flipchart or as a presentation. Besides that, prepare on a flipchart a written difference between values and principles, as well as the examples. Make sure that you understand the difference so you can clearly explain it to your group. Finally, explore and understand the flower petal model (Chapter "Flower of peace education (key concepts)") before explaining it.

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction (10 min)
Begin by framing the session as an exploration of peace education and the main principles behind it.

To start with, ask participants: what do you think is the difference between values and principles?

Facilitate a short discussion and if needed, clarify with the definitions. You can use as a suggestion:

- **values** are subjective beliefs about what is important, they are personal, emotionally rooted, and arguable. They help us form principles.
- **principles** are more universal, consistent, and action-guiding. They are less dependent on personal opinion and serve as a stable foundation for decision-making and practice.

In order to further clarify, you can give a concrete example for "value": compassion, and for "principle": "listen without judgment and try to help those in need." Or for "value": empathy, and for "principle": ability to understand other's perspectives. Other examples of values could be: respect, cooperation, inclusion, non-violence, justice, solidarity. If you present them, make sure to add principles to them.

Ask the group for other examples to make sure there is an understanding of the difference between values and principles.

Emphasise that in peace education, principles help us guide how we design and implement methods.

Step 2: Group work: from methods and values to principles (35 min)
Divide participants into small groups (4-6 people per group, depending on the number of people), while ensuring diversity of perspectives within each group.

Ask each group to think of methods, activities, or approaches used in peace education (these can come from their own experience, prior training, or general knowledge). For each method ask to discuss the following questions:
• **Which value is represented in this method?**
• **What underlying principle does it reflect?**

Before starting, give them an example, for which you can use this session. The method used here is sharing personal experiences in small groups. Values behind this session are respect and inclusion. From these two values, we can deduct the principle of *"Learning should be participatory and based on mutual respect and equal participation"*.

Another example can be the method of role play. Values behind this method can be empathy and understanding. The principle behind can be *"learning should allow experiential exploration of different perspectives to deepen understanding, compassion and reflection"*.

Besides discussion, ask groups to:
• write one principle per sticky note
• link each principle to a concrete method and value they discussed, but no need to write them down - just the final principle

Encourage participants to focus on extracting principles, not just naming the values and describing the activities themselves.

Step 3: Group presentations (10 min)
Invite each group to briefly present their identified principles.
While they are sharing, group similar principles together on a board or wall.
After the presentation, collect a few thoughts on:

- **Which principles appeared most frequently?**
- **Were there any surprising or debated principles?**

Step 4: Flower petal model (20 min)
After sharing in plenary, present the flower petal model of peace education to participants. While explaining, relate to the principles they mentioned before.

Ask what the bees in this model symbolise for them. You can propose the bees could be the metaphor of peacebuilders with their resilience, care, nonviolent action and multiplying the peace education principles.

Step 5: Debriefing (15 min)
Ask participants to reflect over their experience by asking the questions:
- How do you feel after this activity?
- What was the main learning for you?
- Why is it important to be aware of peace education principles in our work?
- How much are these principles present in your work?
- Why is it important to have them present?
- In what ways can applying these principles in your work support sustainable development, especially in building more peaceful, inclusive, and just communities?
- How can you contribute as “bees” to the petals of the “flower” in your local community?

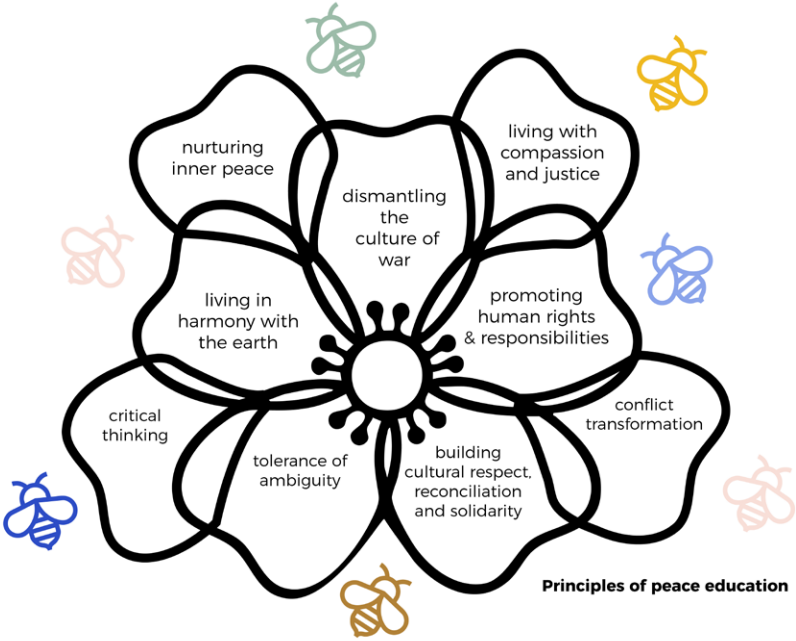
5. Advice & notes

• Before introducing step 2: check with the participants if they have understanding of what are the methods, activities, or approaches used in peace education, and if such understanding is missing - briefly present it and give examples.
• Make sure that you can explain the difference between values and principles as clearly as possible (be prepared to give more examples).
• Prepare examples of method, values and principles. As it can be confusing at the beginning, make sure to give several examples.
• Research and understand the principles explained in the flower in a way that you can clearly pass them to the participants and give them examples.
• If your group needs it, consider preparing a list of values based on the YPAN competence Framework so it can help their reflection.
• Visit the small groups so you can support their work or clarify possible questions that can appear throughout the process.
• Follow the participants' examples with additional attention, so you can link them to the principles explained in the flower.

6. Further information & materials

Principles of peace education

(developed based on the holistic framework of peace education by Toh Swee-Hin (Swee Hin Toh) and Virginia Cawagas



7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Nevena Radosavljević

Read more:

• Swee-Hin, T. & Cawagas, V. (2010). "Peace Education, ESD and the Earth Charter: Interconnections and Synergies". Journal of Education for Sustainable Development, Development 4(2):167-180.

The Jackal café

1. General information:

- **Thematic:** nonviolent communication, awareness of judgments, translating judgements into needs
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to understand the examples of language which makes it difficult to connect with oneself and the others;
  - to give "jackal language" space and to learn to find ways to understand what is behind it;
  - to practice to transform the language which disconnects into language based on needs, feelings and consciousness
- **Number of participants:** 6-16 participants
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:** - cards of judgements and cards (list) of feelings/needs

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Non-Judgmental Relationships
- Self-Empowerment and Inner Peace
- Practising Empathy

2. Short description

"Jackal café" is an activity to develop awareness of the elements in our thinking and communication that disconnect us from ourselves and other people. It aims to empower us to transform our disconnected state, into the connected state of needs-based awareness and communication. Communication based on understanding and connection can be a practice of listening without fixing, dialogue and naming needs behind the words. The activity is based on the framework of Marshall Rosenberg (nonviolent communication) and its practitioners: Bridget Belgrave, Gina Lawrie and Liv Larsson.

3. Preparation

• Print or write on A4 papers the types of jackal language and how they may sound (like in the point 6).
• Get familiar with the metaphor of "jackal language" which represents ways of thinking and language that disconnects from ourselves and the others. The metaphor of "jackal language" is sometimes used alongside the metaphor of "giraffe language". "Giraffe language" represents ways of thinking and language that connect us. These metaphors integrate with the jackal and giraffe puppets that are sometimes used in teaching Nonviolent Communication (NVC).
• Explore the communication framework of Nonviolent Communication described by M. Rosenberg in his book "Nonviolent Communication.Language of life" and materials available at the website of Nonviolent Communication Centre.

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction (10 min)
Introduce the activity and relate it to the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) framework, its purpose, examples of what NVC meant for you, information about M. Rosenberg, 4 elements and 3 modes of NVC. Present the educational objectives and agenda of the activity.

Step 2: Jackal Café (30 min)
Introduce "Jackal Café" as a space to explore the language which disconnects us and recognise the patterns of communication we may use.

1. Put the cards on the floor in pairs (1 card of the type of language and matching card with how this type of language can sound - from the materials section). Make sure to place each pair of cards in a separate place in the room, but in a way that everyone can see what is written on them.
2. Invite the participants to come to the "Jackal Café" and to place themselves randomly next to the pair of cards (invite for more or less equal distribution).
3. Pick a topic for a conversation in the "Jackal Café", which is relevant to everyone, but not personal or intimate, like: travel, shopping, dog owners responsibilities, climate, cultural traditions, neighbours' matters, household tasks, etc.

4. Invite people to start a conversation about the chosen topic, as if they were in the café and they were expressing themselves in line with the cards next to which they stand. Example: if the topic is "climate" and someone stands next to the card: "NO CHOICE" they may use sentences with have to/must, like: "People must pay high fines for not recycling their trash" or "People must reduce the amount of trips by plane to maximum 1 trip per 2 years." Each person is invited to share a sentence/judgement in line with the cards next to which they are standing. The sentence/judgement can be an answer to the previously shared one, or it can be a new "argument". Remind the participants they do not need to agree/disagree with the statements/judgements they share (they may want to try to share opinions different than their own). Make sure it is clear what are the differences between various types of jackal language.

5. Invite participants to move to the pair of cards with the type of the language they use most frequently. Open space for sharing a few more sentences in line with the cards.

Step 3: Moving to feelings and needs (35 min)

- Put around the floor cards with feelings and needs.

- Staying with the same topic, have each person say their jackal thinking, and then step forwards onto a feeling card, stating their feeling, and then to the need card, to state their need. You can invite participants to support each other where they have difficulties in finding their feelings and needs.

- Ensure time for everyone in the café to have space to go through stepping forwards onto feelings and needs.

Alternatively:

Group participants in groups of 3 people and ask them to write down 2-3 sentences/judgements they heard, and make guesses on the feelings and needs behind them. You may propose a following structure:

- **Sentence/judgement:** _____
- **What might the person who says this feel and need?** _____
- **When I hear this statement/label I feel**_____**, because I need** _____

Check with the participants if they would need an example to understand the structure and consider giving the following example:

- **Sentence/judgement:** People must reduce the amount of trips by plane to maximum 1 trip per 2 years (jackal language of NO CHOICE)
- **What might the person who says this feel and need?** The person who says it may feel worried, concerned or frustrated, because they need safety and cooperation.
- **When I hear this statement/label I feel** angry and resistant, **because I need** autonomy, fairness and choice.

Step 4: Debriefing (15 min)
Use the space of debriefing to reflect over the experience through the questions:
• How was the process of using the types of jackal language? Was there something you have realised about yourself?
• How were you feeling when sharing the sentences in the "Jackal Café"?
• Did you have any insights about what shifted in the process of stepping into feelings and needs?
• Why does it matter to recognise "jackal language" patterns?
• How can visiting "Jackal Café" be helpful to connect with ourselves and others?
• How boosting empathetic skills is connected to SDGs?

5. Advice & notes

• To run this activity we advise you to have previous experience with the framework of Nonviolent Communication.
• To maintain the attention and engagement - ask participants to keep their sentences/judgements short.
• The aim of this activity is not to evaluate what people think, but to bring attention to how we think and communicate.

• This activity can open inner reactions almost as if the comments are for real, so it is important to take care of each other during this process. To do so, as a facilitator you can:

-step in as soon as any issues begin to arise, and guide the conversation back to the main topic
- request that anyone who gets uncomfortable raise their hand, so that the group can pause to hear if that person needs support, empathy, a change of topic, or just to step out of the 'café
- make sure the chosen topic is not too personally sensitive or closely connected to someone's current life situation
- watch out for non-verbal clues of distress
- avoid ganging up on one person and 'jackaling' them
- avoid making 'you' statements, stick to 'they' statements
- if people start to 'jackal' you, remind them to return their attention to the topic. If you get triggered, you won't be able to support the safety of the exercise.

• Debrief with care, ending with something that re-establishes everyone's connection to their feelings and needs

6. Further information & materials

Cards of examples of language which disconnects us:

TYPE OF JACKAL LANGUAGE	may sound as...
JUDGEMENT	this is good / bad / right / wrong
LABELS	I am.... you are... they are...
BLAME	fault
DESERVE	punishment/reward
NO CHOICE	...can't... ...have to... ..must..
IMPOSING	...should... ...ought to...
DEMAND	thread

7. Read more & sources

Source: activity described by Agata Stajer based on the work of Bridget Belgrave, Gina Lawrie and Liv Larsson - practitioners of framework of Marshall Rosenberg (nonviolent communication)

Read more:

• Belgrave,B. & Lawrie, G. (1996). NVC Dance Floors ("The Jackal Language Cards". NVC Dance Floors
• Larsson, Liv. (2019). "Walk Your Talk. Tools and Theo-
• Rosenberg Marshall. (2003). "Nonviolent communication. Language of life". PuddleDancer Press.

Trust walk

1. General information

- **Thematic:** trust building, team building, collaborative problem solving
- **Learning objectives:**

  - to explore and reflect on the meaning of trust through creative expression and shared dialogue in nature-based settings;
  - to strengthen participants' ability to communicate openly and respectfully while engaging in non-judgmental interactions with themselves and others;
  - to develop the collaborative problem-solving skills by coordinating movement and decision-making;
  - to create a safe space for empathy, mutual support, and awareness of group dynamics through shared physical and emotional challenges;
  - to increase confidence in relying on each other and being reliable within a group.
- **Number of participants:** 8 - 30 participants
- **Time:** 60 - 90 min
- **Materials:**
  - samples of poems and quotes on trust
  - paper and pens for freewriting
  - a rope long enough for everyone to hold on to
  - blindfolds for all participants but one

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
-SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
-SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Non-Judgmental Relationships

2. Short description

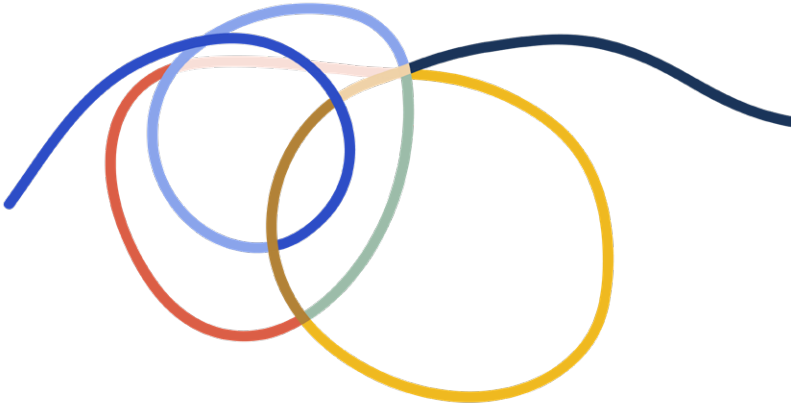
This activity aims to explore building trusting relationships through freewriting exercise and poetic exploration of trust in an outdoor space, and is followed by the entire group holding onto a rope while navigating natural obstacles, relying on collective coordination and teamwork to arrive at the end of the route.

3. Preparation

• Prepare the outdoor space (ideally, a park, a forest, or an area with an uneven landscape) by thinking in advance of the route for the trust walk (relatively short), marking the trail so that it goes through some natural obstacles. Mark the start and the end of the route. Keep the blindfolds at hand in a bag or a box.

• Place the trust quotes and poems in different areas outside. Do it before the start of the route, so that participants can walk around freely and have access to read them, and later locate themselves next to the poems or quotes that speak to them.

• Arrange space for participants to sit down for the freewriting intro and prepare pens and paper.



4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction with freewriting (15-20 min):

• Invite participants to experience freewriting. Explain that freewriting is a continuous writing exercise where participants write nonstop without editing or worrying about correctness to spark ideas and develop their thoughts.

• Tell participants they would need to write continuously about whatever comes to mind when they hear the word "trust". If they get stuck, they need to repeat a word or phrase like "I don't know what to write" until new ideas come. Let participants know that they will not be sharing their texts with the rest of the group.

• Invite participants to get a pen and a piece of paper and find a comfortable spot for writing.

• Set a timer for 10 minutes.

• It's important not to edit or judge the writing. Spelling, grammar, and sentence structure are not important at this stage - the idea is to get into the flow and connect with emotions, associations, and memories.

• Ask participants to keep their ideas with them after the exercise is done.

Step 2: Exploring our notions of trust (20 min):

• Ask participants to walk around and read poems and quotes on trust.

• Allow some time for reading and then ask them to locate themselves next to the words that resonate most with them. If it happens that they do not find such, encourage them to remember a quote/proverb/poem about trust they like.

• Ask participants if any of them want to share why the words speak to them.

• Ask if what they chose correlates to their freewriting experience.

Step 3: Trust walk (20 min):

• Take participants to the beginning of the route. Explain that they are about to participate in a bonding activity by doing a short trust walk. Tell that the key idea of this exercise is to find a solution together and support each other in the process. Explain that they might need to touch each other in the process and ask if everyone feels comfortable with the idea. Address any safety concerns - uneven ground, roots, branches, thorns, etc.

• Give participants clear instructions: they need to get from start to finish, holding onto the rope, with most of them blindfolded. Explain that there is one rope they can hold on to, that there are blindfolds for every participant but one, and that they get to decide how to organise themselves as they move. Participants need to know that it is up to them to decide if it is only one person who stays with their eyes open or they can take turns. Make sure everyone is okay with the physical touch and not triggered with having to close their eyes.

• Allow time for discussion, organisation, and observing the location before the group starts walking. There are many ways to approach the task, which means they can take turns to be blindfolded and lead the group, or choose a person to lead them.

• Before the group starts moving, ask them to be mindful of nature that is around them and notice sounds, smells, or - if not blindfolded - what they see.

• When the group starts moving, make sure you are around to keep them safe as they go. Be aware of the conversation and moments you may have to mediate.

Step 4: Debriefing (15 min)

• When the group arrives at the finish point, allow some time to settle down and invite the group to a circle.
• Do a round of one word describing how they feel.
• Discuss the following matters:

  • Trust: Trust is a relationship based on confidence that people will communicate honestly, respect one another's knowledge, skills, and abilities and keep their interactions unguarded and judgement-free. Is this what happened when you were walking?
  • When did you feel safe vs unsafe?
  • What built trust in this experience?
  • During the process, did you experience anything mentioned in your freewriting or texts you liked about trust?
  • Is trust relevant to peace education? How?
  • In which SDGs trust is especially needed?

5. Advice & notes

• You can start the activity by connecting to this quote of the Sustainability Directory:

"Within sustainability, building trusting relationships is not merely a desirable outcome but a fundamental prerequisite for achieving lasting change. Effective sustainability initiatives require the active participation of diverse groups, which is only possible when there is mutual respect and confidence. This is particularly relevant in addressing complex challenges like climate change or resource depletion, where solutions necessitate collective action and shared responsibility."

Gather samples of poems and quotes on trust before implementing the session. When selecting the quotes/proverbs/sayings on trust, make sure you diversify them and include perspectives from different cultures, genders, eras, and (possibly) languages. Below you can find some examples.

6. Further information & materials

Examples of quotes on trust:

"Trust is the highest form of human motivation."
– Maya Angelou

trust your heart
if the seas catch fire
(and live by love
though the stars walk backward)
– e. e. cummings

"The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them."
— Ernest Hemin

"We're paying the highest tribute you can pay a man. We trust him to do right. It's that simple."
— Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird

"Trust in God, but tie your camel."
— a Saudi Arabian proverb

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Varvara Koneva and inspired by Building Trusting Relationships by Sustainable Directory

My lightning bolts

1. General information

- **Thematic:** use of restorative practices for trainer's self-care during the preparation of a peace education session
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to analyse one's thoughts related to a specific topic of the session and to practice to verbalise and externalise these thoughts
  - to identify potential behaviors or phrases that could trigger trainer's sensitivity
  - to rework triggers as food for thought
  - to reestablish one's role as a trainer in the educational process
- **Number of participants:** 20 participants
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:**
  - notebook/papers
  - colorful markers
  - comfortable space

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Self-Empowerment and Inner Peace

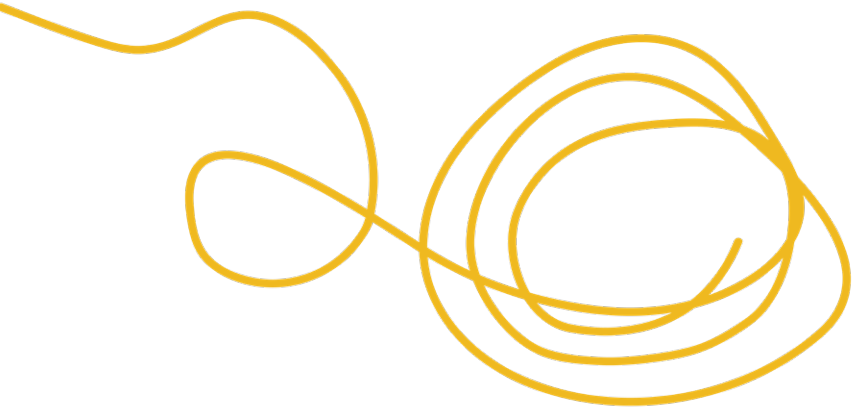
2. Short description

This activity encourages educators to implement a proactive routine in their personal preparation for identifying and reworking themes/attitudes or phrases that could interfere with their sensitivity during a session.

It consists of a graphic visualisation of triggers (with the use of icons and suggestive drawings), connecting triggers with behaviours, reflecting on emotions and their origins and reflection over strategies to use to manage triggering situations.

3. Preparation

• Create a comfortable space that permits every participant to privately reflect on every stage of the activity.
• Give to every participant colorful markers and papers or the pre-printed graphic based on the participant's attitude to drawing.
• Advise participants that due to the sensitivity of the topic they can freely take their time off if they don't feel comfortable in attending the activity.



4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction to the activity (10 min):
Check with the participants if the following statement resonates with them and how:
"as trainers, during the preparation phase of a session, our overall focus is often on the needs of participants and the effective structuring of activities to achieve the intended educational objective."

Introduce the aim and agenda of the activity. Invite participants to use this session as a space to shift our attention to the need to remember the importance of the trainer's well-being during session management and the need for thorough personal preparation when approaching topics that could trigger their sensitivity. Every educator is, in fact, the product of their personal experiences. These are the added values that complement their group management method. Often, however, these personal or social experiences, if not previously analysed, can become an emotional obstacle and negatively impact interaction with participants during the activity. In this case, restorative practices can provide valuable assistance.

Step 2: Introduction to Restorative Practices (10 min):

Familiarise participants with the concept of restorative practices.

Restorative Practices are a conception, philosophy, way of living that enhances relationships like the key of building a happy, peaceful and improving community. Their origins cannot be traced to a specific date, but they draw their structure and principles from alternative conflict resolution practices typical of some indigenous communities. These practices were later adapted in Europe in the 1980s to address the need to broaden the focus of the justice system not only on perpetrators but also on victims, to restore relational balance and repair the damage resulting from a crime. Subsequently, the need was recognised to create proactive practices that build positive relationships to prevent the onset of conflict and potential crimes; hence, restorative practices. The fact that over time they have taken on different functions based on their scope of application (legal, educational, personal) makes them a highly adaptable tool to the target of participants and the most varied training objectives.

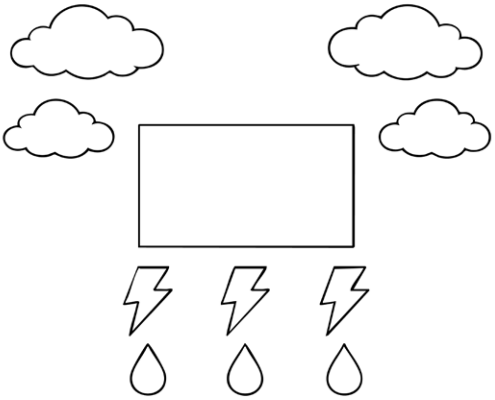
Get familiar with graphic 1 in the section of materials of this activity, so you can present it to your group.

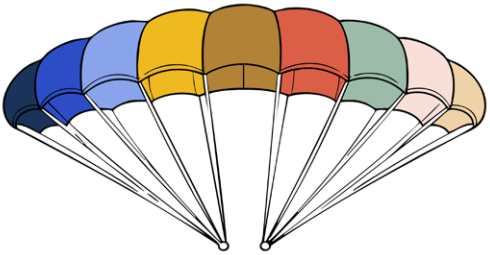
Step 3: Introduction to the suggestive drawing (5 min)

Explain that this part of the activity will be based on the use of icons and suggestive drawings. Explain the elements of the suggestive drawing (graphic 2), keeping in mind that:

- rectangle: topic of the session or training they are going to run;
- clouds: disturbing thoughts;
- lightning: words, attitudes or triggering behaviours;
- rain drops: emotions;
- parachute: outcomes from plenary.

(*Graphic 2)





Step 4: Disturbing thoughts (10 min)
In this step, through the icons, invite participants to indicate disturbing thoughts related to the preparation of the chosen educational session. Give space to participants to write down or represent graphically the disturbing thoughts in the space of clouds.

Step 5: Phrasing triggers (10 min)
Ask to associate each disturbing thought with a phrase or even a physical attitude or behaviour that they consider triggering and write it next to the lightning symbol.

Step 6: Emotions storm (10 min)
• Invite participants to reflect which emotions these thoughts/attitudes/behaviours might stimulate and why? Identify the emotions connected with the trigger and their origin.
• Ask participants to write emotions in the rain drops.
• Then invite participants to reflect over the underlying origin (causes) of that feeling. You can mention as a tip to name the unfulfilled needs as the underlying causes.

Step 7: Creating rainbow parachute (30 min)
• Invite participants to reestablish a natural detachment from the session's topic by indicating which strategies a trainer might use to support in managing these delicate situations. Invite participants to note down their ideas first individually.
• After that, invite participants to return to a plenary session and, based on the emotions each has identified, the group is invited to discuss adn share in the plenary the strategies or techniques an educator could use to take care of their disturbing thoughts.
• You can propose a first round of sharing to mention just the possible emotions and needs that can be involved and which strategy can be used to avoid a detachment from participants or an escalation of tension.
• The outcome of the discussion is verbalized and written in the colored rays of the parachute.

Step 8: Debriefing (20 min)

In the debriefing phase, open space for those who spontaneously want to share.

You can use the follow-up questions:
• how are you feeling now?
• how was it to identify the disturbing thoughts and triggering questions? and emotions and needs? and strategies?
• which steps were the most difficult?
• why is it important to be aware of our needs and feelings when preparing and implementing educational activities?
• how the awareness of our lightning and drops is in line with the values of peace education?
• how can this activity support the work of trainers in peace education?

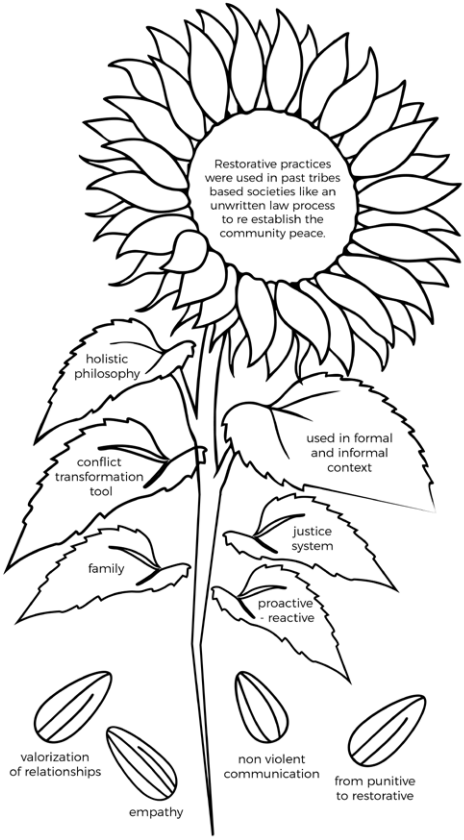
5. Advice & notes

Implementation of this activity is suggested during at least 5 days of education training and for sure after a few days from the beginning to be sure the group is sufficiently consolidated, there is trust, and a respectful and safe environment.

7. Further information & materials

References for this activity can be found in the so-called Reparative Questions (M. Rosenberg), which are adapted to the context of private and personal reflection on an internal conflict.

(*Graphic 1)



7. Read more & sources

Source: activity developed by Serena Granzini with inspiration of Restorative Facilitators like Belinda Hopkins (*Restorative approaches to conflict in schools*) and Michelle Stowe

Read more:

- Howard Zehr, Howard (2002); *The little book of Restorative justice.* Good Books.
- Wachtel, Ted. (2009). *The Restorative practices handbook.* International Institute for Restorative Practices.

Nonviolence in art

1. General information

- **Thematic:** nonviolence, deconstruction of narratives, connecting artistic expressions to peacebuilding concepts
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to get familiar with the notion of nonviolence through exploration of various types of artistic expressions
  - to deconstruct artistic expressions and narratives around peace, conflict, violence, and nonviolence;
  - to encourage empathy and reflection on social issues through creative expression;
  - to connect art with concepts of human rights, peacebuilding, and nonviolent action.
- **Number of participants:** any group size
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:** - printed artistic expressions or/and prepared equipment to listen to the expression through music

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Nonviolence
- Awareness of Existing Conflicts
- Strategies for Peace

2. Short description

The activity creates space to get familiar with and analyse various artistic expressions and their connection to concepts of nonviolence, peace, conflict and violence. It invites critical thinking on how art can influence attitudes, emotions and social change, as well as how it can connect to broader social and global issues.

3. Preparation

• Get familiar with the concept of nonviolence and non-violence (you can use the toolkit "Peace Bag" by UNOY).
• Select several artistic expressions from various disciplines (music, visual art, poetry, film, photography, etc.) which are portraying the topic of nonviolence.
• Prepare printed copies or digital presentations of the materials.

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction (15 min)
Naming artistic expressions
Ask the participants if they can name examples from mainstream culture or their education in which violence or violent conflicts are portrayed. Note them down on the flipchart. Follow-up with the question if they can name examples of mainstream culture or their education which portray nonviolence. Note down the answers. Acknowledge that some examples can be a story of violence but with an idea to call for nonviolence. These examples could be put separately.

Open a discussion if mainstream culture portrays more violent or nonviolent examples, and invite for reflection to the roots and consequences of such a situation.

Exploring nonviolence
Introduce the aim of the session and the topic of nonviolence.

Step 2: Group work (30 min):
Divide participants into groups of 3-4 people. Assign each group one artistic expression to analyse with the aim of seeking for elements of nonviolence and/or elements connected to conflict.

Propose the possible guiding questions:
• To which period in history and to which context the artistic expression is connected?
• How does this artwork relate to peace, nonviolence and conflict?
• What message is the artist trying to communicate? Is the message of nonviolence present directly or indirectly?
• At which level is violence present: direct, cultural, or structural?
• Which emotions are present in the art piece?

Encourage each group to explore the artistic expression and also agree how they would like to present to the other groups their example (through performance, presentation, flipchart).

Step 3: Group presentation and discussion (30 min):
1. Invite each group to present (in their chosen way) the artistic expression with which they were working. To keep engagement and motivation you can encourage dialogue and comparison between different artistic works.
2. Gather presented materials and organise a small exhibition/gallery, so that all the participants can look closer to the art work after the end of the session.

Step 4: Debriefing (15 min)
Facilitate a reflection connecting the activity to peace education and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Possible debriefing questions:
• How are you feeling?
• How was the process of analysing the artistic expressions?
• Was there anything which particularly caught your attention?
• Why is creative expression important in discussions about violence and peace?
• How can art contribute to addressing violence?
• What are the possible obstacles to artistic expression which is socially engaged?
• How can we connect this activity to our everyday life?

5. Advice & notes

• Make sure to encourage sharing various interpretations and to create an atmosphere where multiple interpretations are welcome (it is not about the correct answer, rather about exploration of various perspectives).
• Some artistic works may evoke strong emotions or personal memories. Facilitate discussions with sensitivity and care.
• The session can be emotionally loaded, so you can start with the trigger warning for the group and invitation to take care of themselves.
• You can ask participants to search for or propose examples of artistic expressions about nonviolence, which they know from their own context and would like to share with the group. Alternatively, you can create a flipchart where participants could keep adding the art work they remember.
• Include artistic expressions from different cultures and perspectives, and try to balance the content in terms of the “heaviness” of the artistic piece.
• Check chapter 1 for the violence triangle explanation (if needed for the levels of violence).

6. Further information & materials

You may use the following examples of artistic expressions:

You may use the following examples of artistic expressions:

• „Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo" - movement for the recovery of truth, justice, and memory
• "Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park"
• "Do prostego człowieka" - poem by Julian Tuwim; song interpretation by Akurat
• "Guernica"- painting by Pablo Picasso
• "Home" - poem by Warsan Shire
• "My Calling Card" by Adrian Piper
• "Zombie" - song by Cranberries
• "Letters on nonviolence" by Mohamad Hamdan (Letter 7: On Nonviolence, Communication and Power and Letter 9: It is happening again)
• "CND Soldiers" - Banksy
• "Do corpo à terra" - selection of 4 photographs by Decio Noviello
• "Do It Yourself: Freedom Territory" conceptual installation by Antonio Dias
• Mitrovica Rock School - reconciliatory music program
• Balkan Love - exhibition by photograph Aleksandar Crnogorac
• Perspelopis - comics by Marjane Satrapi

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Agata Stajer in collaboration with Nevena Radosavljević

Read more:

• Peace Bag by Fundació Catalunya Voluntària and UNOY Peacebuilders (2010)
• Handbook for nonviolent campaigns (2009). War Resisters' International

Conflict lens

1. General information

- **Thematic:** learning about existing conflicts, sources of information about conflicts, critical thinking
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to raise awareness about existing conflicts and the tools which document them
  - to identify various narratives and perspectives within conflicts
  - to map and analyse local, regional and global conflicts using conflict tree analysis and online tools
  - to understand importance of conflict framing and its influence on perceptions, media coverage, and policies
- **Number of participants:** any group size
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:** online access to the maps and databases (optionally also projector or shared screen)

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Awareness of Existing Conflicts
- Conflict Analysis
- Context in Educational Programs
- Strategies for Peace

2. Short description

The activity aims to raise awareness of the participants about existing conflicts at the local, regional and global level. Participants will explore various tools which document conflict areas, disputed territories, parties involved and context. The focus is not only on factual knowledge, but also on how conflicts are framed, categorised, and interpreted in different sources.

3. Preparation

Before the activity make sure to:
• select 4-6 case studies in advance (examples are listed in point 6, however feel free to adapt the choice to your group keeping in mind cultural and geographical diversity, as well as type of conflict;
• get familiar with the online tools (listed in point 7) and assess if it is easier for the group to use only one tool for research, or some of them;
• prepare a shared map on the flipchart to visualise the location of the chosen conflict;
• familiarise yourself with terms such as: *conflict analysis, types of conflicts, territorial dispute*.

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction (15 min)

Introduce the aim of the activity and ask for a reflection (in pairs) why raising awareness about existing conflicts is important in peace education and education for sustainable development. Gather 2-3 voices in the plenary, and add your own perspective.

Explain the concept of "conflict analysis" and briefly mention existing tools which can support this process, like conflict tree, onion, mapping stakeholders, etc. (check the tools in Book of Peace Design by Youth Peace Ambassadors Network - p. 80 and onwards).

You can give an example of a conflict tree as a tool and an example of how it can be used for conflict analysis. Mention that part of the session will also be how conflicts are represented and reported.

Step 2: Group work: conflict mapping activity (35 min)

Divide participants into groups of 3-4 people and ask them to pick (as a small group) a conflict about which they would like to get to know more (for the time effectiveness, you can also propose to choose from the list of conflicts in point 6).

Ask each group to share in the plenary which conflict they have chosen to analyse (try to make sure that each group works on a different conflict). Invite participants to learn more about the given conflict.

First approach

As a starting point, ask participants to use one tool from the ones mentioned in point 7 (for example Uppsala Conflict Data Program).

Based on the data from the tool, invite participants to prepare a flipchart with their learnings and the following points:

- location of the conflict;
- main actors;
- type of conflict: active/frozen/nonviolent etc.;
- conflict tree of the conflict: main challenges, its roots and consequences.

Narrative check

After 15 minutes, invite participants to learn about their conflict using various tools (present the remaining tools from point 7).

Ask to add to the flipchart information on:

- How is this conflict described differently across sources?
- What is the missing part of the information which you still do not have? How could you gain it?

Step 3: Conflict sensitivity perspective (10 min)
Introduce the aim of the activity and ask for a re-flec staying in the same groups, ask participants to analyse the framing of the conflict through conflict sensitivity lens (across various sources).

You can use the following guiding questions:
• To which extent the tools are conflict sensitive? For example, how do they refer to the conflicted areas?
• Is the material presented in the way that a reader may get a tendency to pick one side?
• How does framing influence what we understand as violence or peace?

Step 4: Group presentation (10 min)
Ask each group to present their main findings. Adapt the time of presentation to the number of the groups. Alternatively, for time effectiveness, ask groups to share with only one other group (not in the plenary).

Step 5: Debriefing (20 min)
Guide the debriefing part of the activity by asking the following questions:

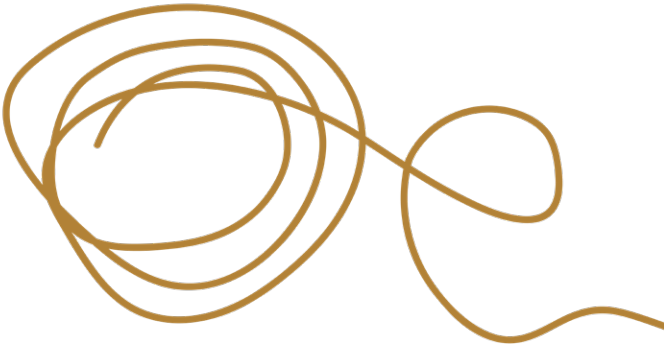
• How are you feeling?
• How was the process of learning about the conflict?
• What surprised you most?
• Did any conflict appear differently depending on the source?
• How does mapping shape empathy or disconnection?
• What is the danger and what is the advantage of trying to understand the conflict in such a limited amount of time?
• How raising awareness about existing conflicts links to SDGs?
• What is one learning you take with you from this session?

Depending on learning direction you would like to take with your participants, you may also pick some of the following questions:

• Who's perspective is mostly heard in the mapped conflicts and what role do the stakeholders take?
• In what way do local or global power relations or injustices play a role in conflicts?
• What connects our lives here to these conflicts happening elsewhere?
• What would a "peace map" look like instead of a "conflict map"?
• How do maps influence political perception or a global hierarchy? (Referring to the Mercator projection that we normally know vs the Peters projection that is closer to real proportions and doesn't reflect the imperialistic power perspective)
• What is missing in the presented tools?
• Are the human testimonies present in those tools?
• How do human stories support the understanding of a conflict situation?

5. Advice & notes

• Keep in mind that discussing various conflicts can be an emotionally demanding task. That is why, make sure to remain with conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm principles.
• Try to place this session within the programme after the session of "conflict analysis", so that participants are familiar with tools of conflict analysis. Alternatively, allocate more time for explaining conflict analysis tool in step 1.
• Avoid simplifying ongoing conflicts into "sides" and be curious about various perspectives in a conflict.
• Focus on observations, not judgments.
• Encourage critical thinking about data sources and their limitations.
• With all the conflict sensitivity, you can map before starting the session if there are people in your group coming from territories affected by conflict and get their consent for being approached with further questions on how conflict affects everyday life. Ensure that participation is voluntary and that those from conflict-affected territories feel safe, respected, and comfortable throughout the session.
• Invite participants to further research and learn about the conflicts, including finding ways and sources to learn about stories of people affected by conflicts.



6. Further information & materials

Choose the case studies accommodating the learning needs of your group. You can propose the case studies about which the members of your group have knowledge, or the opposite. Suggestion: invite people to choose to work on the conflict about which they do not know much.

Possible case studies:
- Balochistan
- Kashmir
- Western Sahara
- Cameroon
- Colombia
- Transnistria
- Catalonia/Scotland
- Olivença

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Agata Stajer

Read more:
Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP): https://ucdp.uu.se/
Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED): https://acleddata.com/
International Crisis Group - CrisisWatch: https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch
War and Peace Map: https://warandpeacemap.org/
Crisis Pulse: https://crisispulse.org/
Modern Insurgent Atlas: https://www.moderninsurgent.org/atlas
toolkit: Book of Peace Design by Youth Peace Ambassadors Network

Whose nature counts?

1. General information

- **Thematic:** sustainability, power relations, bias, privileges
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to identify multiple perspectives on nature;
  - to recognise unequal access to sustainable choices;
  - to map systems behind environmental issues;
  - to reflect on personal privileges, limitations, bias, and relationship to in sustainability;
  - to explore how these reflections (as well as equality, inclusion, and dialogue in sustainability practices) connect to peace as a lifestyle.
- **Number of participants:** 8 - 20 participants
- **Time:** 120 min
- **Materials:**
  - pre-prepared pieces of paper to draw maps
  - a string and clothespins to hang up the maps/drawings,
  - drawn/printed rolecards
  - flipchart with discussion questions
  - paper, markers, magazines for collage, any accessible materials for expressing ideas creatively

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 14: Life below water
- SDG 15: Life on Land
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Peace with Nature
- Non-Judgmental Relationships
- Recognizing Biases

2. Short description

In sustainability education, we often talk about “protecting nature”. But whose nature? Whose voices count when we talk about sustainability? Here are some questions we will try to answer in this session:

Can everyone here make the same environmental choices? Do we all start from the same position when trying to live sustainably? Whose voices shape decisions about a place? How does all of this influence the way we learn about the environment?

Participants will first explore their personal relationship to sustainability by creatively mapping their everyday interactions with nature. They will then collectively visualise how these individual personal experiences form a shared but unequal environmental reality. A role-play around a common river will follow, where they experience how power, perspective, and access shape environmental decision-making, eventually discussing the connection between sustainability, bias, and peace as a lifestyle.

3. Preparation

Prepare the “plots” - one piece of paper with land + water edge for every participant.

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction (5 min)
Brief participants on where they are going to be in the next two hours, address any questions and needs before starting. Explain that we'll start with exploring their personal relationship with sustainability.

Step 2: My sustainability space (25 min)
1. Each participant gets a "plot" (paper with land + water edge). They need to draw or indicate in any other creative way what happens in their space on a daily basis. They need to show how they use their natural space (transport, food, green space, habits, etc.) and indicate what helps and what makes sustainability difficult. They can also express their desirable relationship with nature if it makes them feel more at ease
2. After 15 minutes of drawing, all papers are combined, and we will see that they are forming a single connected shoreline. Arrange the maps/drawings in a line on a string of clothespins or put them down on the floor next to each other so that the connectedness is visible. Have the participants walk along the line to compare drawings and check for patterns of privilege or barriers (10 mins).

Ask participants to remember their observations.

Step 3: Group work - The Living River (45 min)
1. Divide the participants into 5 groups. Give each-group a card representing a perspective tied to a particular kind of role, with both the power and the inequality it may bring (5 mins).

Tell a story of how all these individual spaces are connected by one river. This river supports livelihoods, culture, housing, and biodiversity. But it is under a lot of pressure - conflicting agendas, pollution, development, and climate impacts. A decision must be made about its future.

- A spiritual leader from an indigenous land/ethnic minority closely tied to the land
- Local policymakers
- Real estate developer
* A newly arrived migrant
* An activist from a Conservation NGO

2. Each group discusses the following questions (20 mins) based on their assigned roles:
What does the river mean to us?
What do we need from it?
What are we worried about?
What are we willing / NOT willing to compromise?

After discussing these questions, they need to prepare a proposal to present:
What should happen to the river? (e.g. protect, develop, regulate, share use) and what specific actions they want (build, restrict, conserve, etc.)

Step 4: Group presentations (20 min)
Bring all groups together and have each group present. Ask participants if they think they could ever agree on what should happen to the river.

Step 5: Debriefing (40 min)
Ask participants the following questions to debrief:
• What assumptions did you make about what "good sustainability" looks like, and where do those assumptions come from?
• How did you feel in your role? Was it easy or difficult to represent that perspective? Did anything surprise you?
• Whose voices were loudest? Whose voices were hardest to hear? Did anyone feel excluded or ignored?
• What kind of "nature" was being protected? Who benefited from the sustainability decisions?
• Where do you see similar situations in your community? Who usually makes environmental decisions in your community? Whose voices are missing?
• In your experience of sustainability and peacebuilding education, what are the common biases?
How do you usually address them, if at all?

5. Advice & notes

• The "natural" element can be adapted - it doesn't have to be a river (it usually works best as a metaphor of a shared space, but if any other landscape is more relevant, it can easily be adapted), it could be a forest, a park, any natural space participants can connect with.

• When developing the roles in step 3, keep in mind: to develop your roles based on the reality of the training or the reality of your participants. Depending on your location, it is a good idea to make it relevant for the climate justice issues in the area. You may want to make the roles quite detailed to boost your participants' imagination by adding context.

6. Further information & materials

Key takeaway to ideally illustrate: Sustainability is not only about protecting the environment, it is to a great extent about who gets to make decisions, who benefits, and who is left out. When we actively listen, include, negotiate, and challenge assumptions, sustainability becomes a form of peacebuilding.

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Varvara Koneva. Adapted from and designed based on the Project Learning Tree, Project Wet, Addressing Implicit Bias materials and YPAN know-how.

Peace education: checklist

How to be in line with peace education principles in your activity?

(based on the Competence Framework for Peace-builders by Youth Peace Ambassadors Network)

1. safe & respectful space: building trust, dignity, and respect in the group

- ☐ everyone is treated with respect
- ☐ no discrimination, exclusion, or humiliation
- ☐ participants feel safe to express themselves
- ☐ group agreements are clear and followed

2. inclusion & participation: ensuring equal participation for all

- ☐ all participants are involved and their involvement is tailored to their needs
- ☐ various voices are included
- ☐ activities are accessible and adapted to the needs of the group
- ☐ barriers to participation are reduced

3. dialogue & communication; practising non-violent communication

- ☐ listening is active and respectful
- ☐ participants listen to understand, not to debate
- ☐ dialogue is encouraged over debate
- ☐ conflicts in discussion are handled constructively and nonviolently

4. perspective-taking: understanding different viewpoints

- ☐ multiple perspectives are included
- ☐ participants explore “the other side”
- ☐ stereotypes are recognised and questioned
- ☐ complexity of conflicts is recognised

5. critical thinking & media awareness: questioning information and narratives

- ☐ participants reflect on sources and information
- ☐ media messages are discussed critically
- ☐ assumptions and biases are explored
- ☐ questions like “why?” and “how do we know?” are used

6. emotional awareness & empathy: recognising and respecting emotions in learning

- ☐ space is given for emotional reactions
- ☐ empathy is encouraged
- ☐ participants can step back if needed
- ☐ emotional safety is maintained by facilitator

7. nonviolence & peaceful response: understanding alternatives to violence

- ☐ concepts of violence and peace are explored
- ☐ non-violent approaches are promoted
- ☐ alternatives to violence are explored
- ☐ dialogue and cooperation are highlighted
  violence is not normalised or glorified

8. power & inequality awareness: understanding structures behind conflict

- ☐ power relations are discussed openly
- ☐ structural causes of conflict are explored
- ☐ marginalised voices are represented
- ☐ inequality is recognised in conflict dynamics

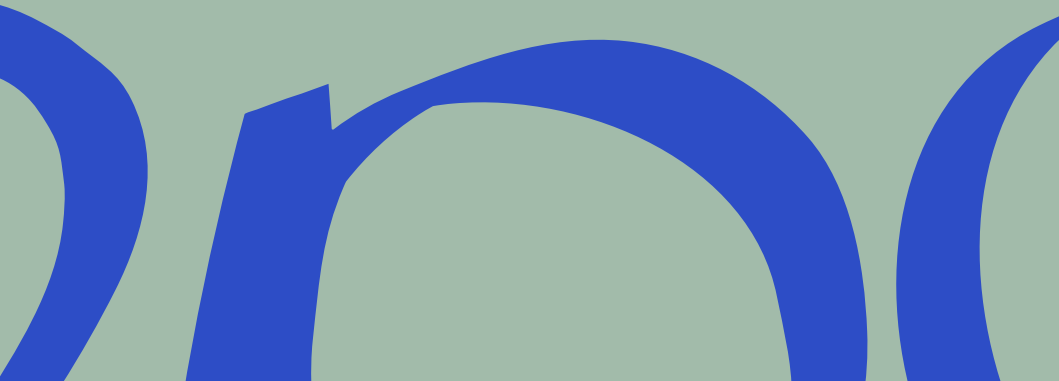
9. relevance to everyday life: connecting learning to real contexts

- ☐ examples are linked to everyday life situations
- ☐ local and global connections are made
- ☐ concepts are understandable and relevant
- ☐ earning connects to participants' lived experience

10. reflection & action: turning learning into awareness and action

- ☐ time is given for reflection and debriefing
- ☐ key learnings are expressed and summarised by participants
- ☐ participants identify possible actions
- ☐ link to taking action and peacebuilding is made

Sustainable development



Sustainable development: concept

Introduction and our understanding of it

Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the **needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations** to meet their own needs. This simple definition has profound implications for how we organise our societies, economies and relationships with nature.

At its core, sustainable development requires the **harmonisation of three interconnected elements:**

- **Economic growth** that is sustainable and creates opportunities for all
- **Social inclusion** that reduces inequalities and raises living standards
- **Environmental protection** that safeguards natural resources and ecosystems

Crucially, sustainable development is only globally just when everyone is involved in shaping solutions and sharing benefits equally. This requires addressing power imbalances, listening to marginalised voices and recognising that different communities have different needs, capacities and historical responsibilities.

Important critical questions to ask

While education and the idea of sustainable development is valuable, it is not without limitations. Critical reflection can help us to improve our practice:

Important critical questions to ask

- **Whose voices are heard?** Which perspectives predominantly shape sustainability discourse? Who plays an active role in defining goals and solutions? To what extent are power relations and structures reflected in ESD? (Often, not enough.)

- **Whose definition of development is it?** The European idea of development often becomes the norm. Who gets to define what "sustainability" means? Whose voices are centred, and whose are marginalised, particularly in the Global South and in indigenous communities?

- **Are the SDGs internally consistent?** The SDGs advocate sustainable economic growth and fair working conditions (SDGs 8 and 10), as well as the protection of ecosystems and the climate (SDGs 13, 14 and 15). This raises a fundamental question: Are capitalism and climate justice compatible? Can we have infinite economic growth on a finite planet?

While these questions offer a critical view of sustainable development, some scholars fundamentally question whether the concept of "development" can be reformed, or if entirely different frameworks are needed. This is mostly known as "critical development theory".

What are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)?

In 2015, 193 UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, centered on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 specific targets in a multi-level process. These goals represent a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and enhance prosperity for all by 2030.

The process was led by the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, in collaboration with UN member states. The intention was to make it participatory and to include voices from around the world.

The main bodies involved in the process were a High-Level Panel of 27 individuals and more than 30 Working Groups comprising nations and groups of nations. Throughout the process, the UN held national consultations to capture the views of people from all over the world, as well as those from different groups and those directly affected by poverty. See the sources for further details.

ENVIRONMENTAL
Protecting ecosystems, biodiversity...
COMMUNITY SOLAR FARM IN VILLAGE X
SOCIAL
Equality, Human Rights
WOMEN COOPERATIVE ON COFFEE
ECONOMIC
livelihoods, fair distribution...
CACAO FAIRTRADE PROGRAMME
1) SPECIFIC INITIATIVE
2) POSSIBLE CONFLICTS
WHO MIGHT OPPOSE?
· COMPETING NEEDS?
· CREATES INEQUALITIES / INJUSTICES?
· DO THE THREE LAYERS ALIGN/COMPETE
CULTURE OF WAR & VIOLENCE
· BELIEF IN POWER BASED ON FORCE
· RAVING AN ENEMY
· AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNANCE
· SECRECY · PROPAGANDA
· ARMAMENT
· EXPLOITATION OF PEOPLE
· EXPLOITATION OF NATURE
· MALE DOMINATION
· HIERARCHICAL AUTHORITY
· INSTITUTIONALISED COMPETITION
CULTURE OF PEACE & NON-VIOLENCE
· EDUCATION FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE
· UNDERSTANDING, TOLERANCE
· DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION
· FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION
· DISARMAMENT
· HUMAN RIGHTS
· SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
· GENDER EQUALITY
· DIALOGUE, PARTICIPATION
· CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

SDG progress by target

1 NO POVERTY

- 1.1 International poverty
- 1.2 National poverty
- 1.3 Social protection
- 1.4 Access to basic services
- 1.5 Resilience to disasters
- 1.a Government spending on essential services
- 1.b Poverty eradication policies

2 ZERO HUNGER

- 2.1 Undernourishment and food security
- 2.2 Malnutrition
- 2.3 Small-scale food producers
- 2.4 Productive and sustainable agriculture
- 2.5 Genetic resources for agriculture
- 2.a Investment in agriculture
- 2.b Agricultural export subsidies
- 2.c Food price anomalies

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- 3.1 Maternal mortality
- 3.2 Child mortality
- 3.3 Communicable diseases
- 3.4 NCD and mental health
- 3.5 Substance abuse and treatment
- 3.6 Road traffic accidents
- 3.7 Sexual and reproductive health
- 3.8 Universal health coverage
- 3.9 Health impact of pollution
- 3.a Tobacco control
- 3.b Immunization coverage
- 3.c Health workforce
- 3.d Management of health risks

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

- 4.1 Effective learning outcomes
- 4.2 Early childhood education
- 4.3 TVET and tertiary education
- 4.4 Skills for employment
- 4.5 Equal access to education
- 4.6 Adult literacy and numeracy
- 4.7 Sustainable development education
- 4.a Education facilities
- 4.b ODA for scholarships
- 4.c Qualified teachers

5 GENDER EQUALITY

- 5.1 Legal frameworks on gender equality
- 5.2 Violence against women and girls
- 5.3 Child marriage
- 5.4 Unpaid care and domestic work
- 5.5 Women in leadership
- 5.6 Reproductive health access and rights
- 5.a Equal economic rights for women
- 5.b Technology for women empowerment
- 5.c Gender-responsive budgeting

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

- 6.1 Safe drinking water
- 6.2 Access to sanitation and hygiene
- 6.3 Water quality
- 6.4 Water-use efficiency
- 6.5 Transboundary water cooperation
- 6.6 Water-related ecosystems
- 6.a International cooperation on water and sanitation
- 6.b Participatory water and sanitation management

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

- 7.1 Access to energy services
- 7.2 Share of renewable energy
- 7.3 Energy efficiency
- 7.a International cooperation on energy
- 7.b Investing in energy infrastructure

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

- 8.1 Economic growth
- 8.2 Economic productivity
- 8.3 Formalization of SMEs
- 8.4 Material resource efficiency
- 8.5 Full employment and decent work
- 8.6 Youth NEET
- 8.7 Child and forced labour
- 8.8 Labour rights and safe working environment
- 8.9 Sustainable tourism
- 8.10 Access to financial services
- 8.a Aid for Trade
- 8.b Strategy for youth employment

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 9.1 Infrastructure development
- 9.2 Sustainable/inclusive industrialization
- 9.3 Small-scale industries' access to finance
- 9.4 Sustainable and clean industries
- 9.5 Research and development
- 9.a ODA for infrastructure
- 9.b Domestic technology development
- 9.c Access to ICT and the Internet

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

- 10.1 Income growth of bottom 40 per cent
- 10.2 Income distribution
- 10.3 Eliminate discrimination
- 10.4 Fiscal and social protection policies
- 10.5 Regulation of financial markets
- 10.6 Inclusive global governance
- 10.7 Safe migration and mobility
- 10.a Special and differential treatment (WTO)
- 10.b Resource flows for development
- 10.c Remittance costs

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

11.1	Housing and basic services	Stagnation
11.2	Public transport systems	Insufficient data
11.3	Sustainable urbanization	Insufficient data
11.4	Cultural and natural heritage	Insufficient data
11.5	Human and economic losses to disasters	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
11.6	Urban air quality and waste management	On track or target met
11.7	Urban green and public spaces	Insufficient data
11.a	Urban planning policies	On track or target met
11.b	Disaster risk management policies	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
11.c	Sustainable and resilient buildings	Insufficient data

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

12.1	Programmes on sustainable consumption and production	On track or target met
12.2	Sustainable use of natural resources	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
12.3	Food waste and losses	Regression
12.4	Managing chemicals and wastes	Stagnation
12.5	Reduction in waste generation	Regression
12.6	Corporate sustainable practices	On track or target met
12.7	Public procurement practices	On track or target met
12.8	Sustainable development awareness	Insufficient data
12.a	Support for R&D capacity for sustainable development	On track or target met
12.b	Sustainable tourism monitoring	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
12.c	Fossil fuel subsidies	Regression

13 CLIMATE ACTION

13.1	Resilience and adaptive capacity	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
13.2	Climate change policies	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
13.3	Climate change awareness	Insufficient data
13.a	UNFCCC commitments	On track or target met
13.b	Climate change planning and management	Insufficient data

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

14.1	Marine pollution	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
14.2	Marine and coastal ecosystems	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
14.3	Ocean acidification	Regression
14.4	Sustainable fishing	Regression
14.5	Conservation of coastal and marine areas	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
14.6	Fisheries subsidies	On track or target met
14.7	Marine resources for SIDS and LDCs	Regression
14.a	Research capacity and marine technology	Regression
14.b	Small-scale artisanal fishing	On track or target met
14.c	Implementing UNCLOS	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed

15 LIFE ON LAND

15.1	Terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems	Stagnation
15.2	Sustainable forests management	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
15.3	Desertification and land degradation	Regression
15.4	Conservation of mountain ecosystems	Stagnation
15.5	Loss of biodiversity	Regression
15.6	Utilization of genetic resources	On track or target met
15.7	Protected species trafficking	Insufficient data
15.8	Invasive alien species	On track or target met
15.9	Biodiversity in national and local planning	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
15.a	Resources for biodiversity and ecosystems	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
15.b	Resources for forest management	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
15.c	Protected species trafficking (global)	Insufficient data

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

16.1	Reduction of violence and related deaths	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
16.2	Human trafficking	Insufficient data
16.3	Justice for all	Stagnation
16.4	Illicit financial and arms flows	Insufficient data
16.5	Corruption and bribery	Insufficient data
16.6	Effective institutions	Insufficient data
16.7	Inclusive decision-making	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
16.8	Inclusive global governance	Stagnation
16.9	Legal identity	Insufficient data
16.10	Public access to information	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
16.a	National human rights institutions	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
16.b	Non-discriminatory laws	Regression

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

17.1	Tax and other revenue collection	Stagnation
17.2	ODA commitment by developed countries	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
17.3	Additional financial resources for development	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
17.4	Debt sustainability	Regression
17.5	Investment promotion for LDCs	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
17.6	Access to technology	On track or target met
17.7	Transfer of technologies	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
17.8	Use of the Internet	On track or target met
17.9	Capacity-building for SDGs	On track or target met
17.10	Multilateral trading system (WTO)	On track or target met
17.11	Exports of developing countries	Stagnation
17.12	Duty-free market access for LDCs	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
17.13	Global macroeconomic stability	Stagnation
17.14	Policy coherence for sustainable development	Insufficient data
17.15	Respect country's policy space	Insufficient data
17.16	Global partnership for sustainable development	Insufficient data
17.17	Partnerships (public, private, CSO)	Insufficient data
17.18	National statistics availability	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
17.19	Statistical capacity	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed

Legend

- On track or target met
- Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
- Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
- Stagnation
- Regression
- Insufficient data

List of acronyms and abbreviations

CSO: Civil society organization

ICT: Information and communications technology

NCD: Non-communicable disease

NEET: Not in employment, education or training

ODA: Official development assistance

R&D: Research and development

SME: Small and medium enterprise

TVET: Technical and vocational education and training

UNCLOS: United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

WTO: World Trade Organization

For further details, please see the SDG Progress Chart 2025. Technical note at: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/

United Nations Statistics Division. (2025). The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025. United Nations. Retrieved from https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/)

Key features of the SDGs

- **Universal application:** Unlike the earlier Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which focused only on "developing countries", the SDGs apply to all nations, recognising that every country faces sustainability challenges.

- **Comprehensive scope:** The SDGs cover previously neglected areas, including inequality (SDG 10), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and sustainable cities (SDG 11).

- **Interconnectedness:** Progress on one goal often supports or depends on progress in others; they cannot be achieved in isolation.

- **Implementation focus:** There is a strong emphasis on the means of implementation, including finance, capacity building, technology transfer and institutional development.

- **Climate and poverty:** There is a particular focus on tackling climate change (SDG 13) and eradicating poverty (SDG 1) as fundamental challenges.

- **Not legally binding:** While countries make political commitments, implementation relies on national action and voluntary monitoring.

The SDGs provide a shared language and framework for addressing global challenges. However, they also raise important questions and criticism: Who defines what "sustainable" means? Are continuous economic growth and environmental protection really compatible?

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Learning Education

Important dates and historical moments

The 1992 Rio Earth Summit firmly placed sustainable development on the global agenda. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) mobilised educational systems worldwide. In 2015, two significant frameworks emerged: UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While the GCED was the first approach to promote global solidarity through learning, today Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) provides the overarching global framework for achieving the 2030 Agenda, recognising education as central to this.

What is ESD?

UNESCO is leading the global implementation of SDG 4 (Quality Education) and defines Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as follows: *"Education that empowers learners to make informed decisions and take responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations."*

ESD is not just environmental education. Rather, it integrates the social, economic and environmental dimensions, adopting a transformative learning approach that focuses on enabling action and change. As UNESCO emphasises, education must be designed so that *"learners live what they learn and learn what they live"*, creating coherence between educational content, pedagogy and the learning environment itself.

Key principles of ESD

- **Holistic and transformative**
  ESD addresses what we learn, how we learn, and the contexts in which learning happens. It transforms both learners and societies towards sustainability by integrating environmental, social, economic and cultural dimensions.

- **Integration of values**
  ESD is grounded in core values, such as respect for human dignity and human rights, social justice and equity, gender equality, cultural diversity, environmental protection and intergenerational responsibility.

- **Critical thinking and problem-solving**
  Learners are encouraged to question assumptions and norms, examine root causes rather than just symptoms, explore alternative futures and deal constructively with complexity, uncertainty and ethical dilemmas.

- **Multi-method and participatory**
  ESD uses learner-centred, action-oriented approaches that emphasise participation in decision-making, experiential learning and collaborative exploration, rather than passive knowledge transmission.

- **Locally relevant and culturally appropriate**
  Effective ESD addresses local priorities and contexts, respects indigenous and local knowledge systems, and connects local actions to global issues in meaningful ways.

- **Engagement and empowerment**
  ESD empowers learners as agents of change, fostering hope, agency and the capacity for individual and collective action, rather than creating paralysis or despair.

ESD develops eight interconnected key competencies:

- **Systems thinking:** Understanding interconnections and complexity.
- **Anticipatory thinking:** Envisioning future scenarios and consequences
- **Critical thinking:** Questioning norms, practices and opinions
- **Normative competence:** Understanding and reflecting on values
- **Strategic competence:** Collectively developing and implementing innovative actions
- **Collaboration competence:** Learning from others and working together
- **Self-awareness competence:** Reflecting on one's own role in local and global communities
- **Integrated problem-solving:** Applying different frameworks to complex sustainability challenges.

What is Global Learning?

Global Learning (Globales Lernen) is an **educational approach** that has emerged, particularly in German-speaking contexts, in order to address the challenges posed by globalisation and our interconnected world. While closely related to ESD, Global Learning has a distinct focus that strengthens sustainability education.

It provides a framework for teaching topics related to globalisation, social justice and sustainable development. **"Global" refers both thematically (the world) and methodologically (holistic approaches).** The primary learning objective is to develop the ability to respond to global change by actively participating in social and political processes.

How Global Learning complements ESD

While ESD primarily focuses on environmental sustainability and universal application of planetary boundaries, Global Learning emphasises social justice, inequality and development politics, particularly targeting attitudes and behaviours in the Global North.

Together, they create a more complete picture:
• Global Learning provides critical political analysis of North-South power dynamics
• ESD provides the ecological framework and understanding of planetary boundaries
• Both recognize the need for systemic transformation and interconnected solutions

Why integrating Peace Education with ESD matters

Besides its transformative approach, there are **common gaps in ESD:**

Individualisation: Overemphasis on individual behaviour change (e.g. recycling and consumption choices) while neglecting systemic change and structural transformation.

Western-centric approaches: Dominated by Global North perspectives, which often marginalise indigenous and local knowledge systems that offer alternative sustainability pathways.

Conflict avoidance: Rarely addresses the conflicts inherent in sustainability transitions – whose jobs are lost in green transitions? Who pays the costs? Who benefits?

Separated from justice: Environmental issues are often treated separately from inequality, discrimination and human rights, rather than being considered as interconnected.

Limited emotional engagement: The focus is on knowledge transfer and action without adequately addressing eco-anxiety, grief, or cultivating hope and agency.

How peace education with ESD support each other

These gaps reveal why combining Peace Education with ESD creates a more transformative learning experience. Both approaches promote dignity, equality, human rights, critical thinking, questioning of power structures and democratic participation.
Nevertheless, conflict is central to sustainability, yet not very present in ESD. Here are some examples of **how sustainability challenges involve conflict dimensions:**

- Resource conflicts over water, land and energy access
- Climate justice conflicts about historical responsibility versus current impacts
- Transition conflicts about fair transitions for affected workers and communities
- Intergenerational conflicts between the needs of the present and those of future generations
- Value conflicts between economic growth and environmental protection

Peace education strengthens ESD by providing:

- Conflict sensitivity to recognise and address tensions;
- Prejudice awareness to understand how bias shapes environmental attitudes;
- Dialogue skills to bridge polarisation in climate debates;
- Structural analysis of root causes connecting environmental destruction and violence;
- Non-violent communication to facilitate difficult conversations;
- Trauma-informed approaches to address eco-anxiety and climate grief.

ESD strengthens peace education by providing:

- Concrete contexts in which environmental issues provide tangible entry points;
- Systems thinking that connects environmental degradation to conflict;
- Future orientation recognizing that sustainability requires peace;
- Common ground where environmental issues can unite across differences;
- Practical action that offers concrete ways to engage in peacebuilding.

This is why the APE approach combines both. Peace Education provides the conflict competencies and power analysis that ESD often lacks, while ESD provides the ecological framework and context of planetary boundaries that ground peace work in current realities. Together, they enable an approach to education that does not avoid difficult questions about power, justice and conflict, but actively engages with them as being essential to creating sustainable and peaceful futures.

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Sustainable development activities

What does “development” actually mean?

1. General information

- **Thematic:** criticism of development, power structures, critical reflection, SDG framework introduction
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to reflect critically about the term and concept “development”
  - to apply the SDG framework to their own local contexts
  - to identify power dynamics and mechanisms of oppression and who defines development
  - to recognize the limitations of predominantly economic measures of development
- **Number of participants:** any group size (best suited for beginner groups in sustainable development)
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:**
  - flipcharts and markers
  - printed or drawn overview of the SDG’s
  - printed list of indicators

Link to SDG:
- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 10: Reduced inequalities

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Non-Judgmental Relationships
- Recognizing Biases

2. Short description

The concept of "development" is central to discussions about the global economy and the resolution of global inequality and conflicts. It is often implicitly considered or explicitly referenced when addressing these issues.

This exercise critically examines the concept of "development", laying the groundwork for maintaining a critical perspective on it throughout the rest of the training. Using the SDGs as a reference point, it raises awareness of the global power structures and narratives that influence our behaviour and perceptions. This session is ideal for introducing the concept of "development" to beginner groups.

3. Preparation

- Print SDG cards: 17 goals with icons and brief descriptions and indicators (See below)
- Facilitator preparation: Review the SDG framework and familiarise yourself with all 17 goals.
- Familiarise yourself with examples and the approach based on the Sustainable Development chapter (Chapter: Sustainable Development Concept)
- Review the basics of critical development theory and be comfortable discussing concepts such as Eurocentrism, Global North/South dynamics and historical definitions of "development" (see read more section).

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction and brainstorming (15 min)

Ask participants to share their thoughts and knowledge on the term "development". Follow up with the following questions, recording all responses on a flipchart without offering any judgement or corrections:

- What does "development" mean to you?
- What does "development" mean in the context of the global economy?
- How is "development" measured?
- What is important in order to be considered "developed"?

After collecting the responses, facilitate a brief analysis.
- What strikes you when you look at the key points we have just gathered?
- What umbrella terms or categories can you identify for the points mentioned?
- What strikes you about these umbrella terms? Which umbrella terms do you feel are missing?

Close the brainstorming here by telling participants that you will leave it here and we look at it again later.

*Note: If the group is already taking a critical view of development, add the aspect of sustainability to the discussion, as well as potential criticisms of the SDGs in general.

Step 2: Facilitator input: introduction to the SDGs (optional, 10 min)

Depending on the participants' level of knowledge and how the training is progressing, it may be useful to familiarise them with the concept of the SDGs.

First, assess existing knowledge by asking them: What do you know about the SDGs (the Sustainable Development Goals)?

Listen to their answers and provide a brief introduction afterwards (see "Further information and materials").

Step 3: Group work: applying the SDGs to our own contexts (25 min)

Explain to participants that we will explore how the concept of development applies to our respective countries and communities.

Form groups: Divide the participants into groups of three to five people. Groups can be formed randomly or by regional or national connection.

Distribute materials: Give each group 3–4 different SDG cards with the indicators. Ensure that groups receive a mix of social, environmental and economic goals.

Task: Reflect and discuss on the following question:
- What kind of development is needed in the place where you feel local? (e.g. Germany or Spain). Check your assigned SDGs, and discuss which targets have already been achieved? Which have not been achieved? (Make sure to tell participants that they don't have to check all indicators in detail and it's about their perception.)

Allow the groups 20 minutes for discussion. Encourage them to use concrete examples and personal observations. Give them pens and paper but leave it optional if they want to write things down. Tell them they need to share their observations afterwards with the main group.

Step 4: Group presentations (15 min)

Groups share their reflections with the whole group. To encourage a more conversational atmosphere, participants can remain seated.

Give the groups the following prompt for the presentation to avoid detailed discussions about the state of each country itself, and focus more on perceptions and learnings.

What was your perception of progress and "development" in your country and how did it change after the group discussion?

Potentially add key themes on the flipchart while participants share.

Step 5: Critical reflection and debriefing (20–25 min)

- How does this activity compare to our initial brainstorming about development?
- Did anything surprise you in the SDG group work?
- Where did you get your information about the country's progress on the SDGs from? How is it influenced?
- Did applying the SDGs to your own context change your understanding of what "development" (or sustainability) means?
- Do you feel that "development" is primarily measured in economic terms? If so, why is that?
- Who or what serves as the benchmark for "development"?

- Who determines what “development” is, and who is “developed”? Why is that the case?
- Do countries in the Global South or the Global North need to “develop” more? Or do they need to develop differently?
- How does the language we use shape our understanding of global inequality and responsibility?
- How might a more critical understanding of development connect to peace education?

Summarises the key insights from the discussion, emphasising that development is not neutral or universal, but is shaped by power, history and which voices are heard. Point to the tension in the SDGs concerning the three layers and that this is also where criticism can be mentioned.

Link this session potentially to the triangle of violence and peace. Specifically on the aspect of “Time”, which is understood as a potential impact on future generations and how we talk about war and peace. This can be linked to the definition of sustainable development: *Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

(See session: Introduction to Peacebuilding)

5. Advice & notes

For the exercise to be successful, it is important that the facilitator familiarises themselves with the concept of "development" and the critiques of it before conducting the session.

Depending on the level of knowledge of participants, it might be useful to explain the general concept and framework of SDGs within the session.

During the initial brainstorming session, participants are asked about their knowledge of and associations with the concept of "development". In doing so, participants are likely to make statements that reinforce and perpetuate the inherent power dynamics and associated discrimination of the concept. Furthermore, other participants may hear discriminatory statements for the first time and internalise them.
There is also the possibility that the group already brings a critical perspective from the beginning. If so, broaden the focus to include a more critical examination of the sustainability aspect of development and the SDGs.

Although the concept is afterwards examined critically and participants are encouraged to reflect on it, raising the issue can still cause hurt to people who are discriminated against by this concept. The facilitator should therefore carefully consider whether the exercise is suitable for the group.

In the critical reflection, it may be that few responses emerge from the group, or only those that do not fundamentally question the concept. In this case, the facilitator can encourage a critical perspective among participants by making suggestions or asking more specific questions. They can also focus on individual terms mentioned during the brainstorming session, which can then be used to deconstruct the concept critically.

In any case, the statements gathered during the initial brainstorming session regarding the concept of "development" should be challenged and critically examined by the end. If the group has been unable to develop a critical perspective, the facilitator should therefore provide a brief input at the end.

6. Further information & materials

SDG Input

Here are some main notes. Further information is in the Sustainable Development Concept part
https://sdgs.un.org/goals
https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/

• 17 goals (169 sub-goals) by 2030 (Agenda 2030) in 2015 adopted
• Process was intended participatory (check section "What are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)?" for details)
• Not legally binding, national implementation
• Includes everyone (178 countries, UN United Nations)
• Are universal and apply to all countries, whereas the MDGs only applied to "developing countries"
• Cover more areas, Strong thematic focus on combating climate change and eradicating poverty, focus on implementation

Indicators list to be shared with participants

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Kathrin David based on Informationsbüro Nicaragua e. V. Educational Material "Wirtschaft"

Read more:

Escobar, A. (2011). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World.* Princeton University Press.

Sachs, W. (Ed.) (2019). *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power (3rd edition).* Zed Books.

Kothari, A. et al. (Eds.) (2019). *Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary.* Tulika Books/Columbia University Press.

Degrowth.info: https://degrowth.info/
- Research, news, and resources on degrowth and post-development

Analysing environmental justice with the conflict tree

1. General information

- **Thematic:** conflict analysis, environmental justice, global power dynamics

- **Learning objectives:**
  - to analyse environmental conflicts using the conflict tree tool
  - to recognise the global scale of environmental conflicts
  - to understand the connections between environmental issues, conflicts, and their root causes
  - to reflect on one's own role in a globalised world
  - to recognise power structures and mechanisms of oppression
- **Number of participants:** 6-30 participants
- **Time:** 120 min
- **Materials:**
  - printed case studies
  - flipchart
  - markers & colourful post-its

Link to SDG:
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 15: Life on Land
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities)

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Awareness of Existing Conflicts
- Conflict Analysis

2. Short description

This exercise uses the Conflict Tree to analyse real-world environmental conflicts in different regions of the world. Participants explore the visible effects, identify the core conflicts, and trace the underlying root causes. By comparing multiple cases, participants recognise patterns that connect seemingly separate conflicts, gaining an understanding of how environmental degradation intersects with violence, resource extraction, power imbalances, and injustice. The session emphasises the agency of affected communities, encouraging critical reflection on participants' roles in global resource consumption and their responsibilities as community members to address environmental issues through the lenses of justice and peace.

3. Preparation

- Print the case studies for the group work (potentially adapted to the group size)
- Prepare the flipchart to explain the Conflict Tree
- Familiarise yourself with conflict analysis

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction (10 min)

Start by asking an opening question to activate prior knowledge: Can you think of any situations in which environmental issues or resource extraction have led to conflict? Emphasise that these could be anywhere in the world.
Collect a few responses to establish that environmental conflicts are widespread and diverse.
Explain that the aim of this session is to understand environmental conflicts and analyse their root causes.

Step 2: Facilitator input: presentation of the Conflict Tree (10 min)

Show a visual representation of a tree (either draw it on a flipchart or display a prepared image). Explain that the Conflict Tree is a useful technique for understanding and visualising the various factors contributing to a conflict or problem. It enables a structured examination of the underlying causes and consequences of a conflict.

Explain the three parts:

- **Trunk** = the core conflict/problem itself
- **Branches/Leaves** = visible effects and consequences (what we see and experience)
- **Roots** = underlying causes (what feeds the conflict)

Add that it is important to identify the key factors that contribute to the main conflict. These factors should represent significant causes or drivers that directly influence the conflict. They can be made visible in the main roots and connected to smaller roots. Participants should also identify the relationships and dependencies between different branches. This helps us to understand how the different elements of the conflict interact with each other.

Step 3: Group work: case studies (30–40 min)

Divide the participants into five working groups. Distribute the five case studies between the groups.

- Roșia Montană Gold Mining, Romania
- Marlin Mine, Guatemala
- Fracking in Denton, USA
- Hambach Forest and Rhineland Coal Mining, Germany
- Pagar Batu Village and Palm Oil Expansion, Indonesia

Before they start the group work, give them the following instructions:

• Read the case study carefully.

• Analyse the conflict using the conflict tree.

/ Identify and write on the trunk: What is the core conflict? (e.g. Local community vs. mining corporation over land use and water).
/ Identify and write on branches/leaves: What are the visible effects? (e.g. health problems, displacement, protests, violence, environmental destruction and economic impacts).
/Identify and write on the roots: What are the underlying causes? (economic, political, social, environmental and historical factors).

• Check your understanding by visiting www.ejatlas.org and searching for your case. This website is a global interactive map of environmental (in)justice. (Possibly to give them this extra resource after 20minutes of work or leave this step out)

• Prepare a flipchart for a short presentation.

Step 4: Group presentation (25 min)

Invite each group to give a brief presentation of their analysis and findings (5 minutes per group). Afterwards, the audience can ask questions or ask for clarifications.

Step 5: Debriefing (35 min)

• What has surprised you in the analysis? What did you find especially interesting?
• What do these different cases have in common, and how are they different?
• Looking at all our conflict trees, which roots appear again and again?
• Who typically benefits from resource extraction? Who typically suffers?
• Do you see any economic or political structures connecting these seemingly separate conflicts?
• Many of these conflicts involve international corporations. What does that tell us?
• How do historical factors such as colonialism manifest themselves in these conflicts?
• Can you see any connections between these environmental conflicts and peace or violence?
• In all these cases, we see people organising and resisting. What forms of action did you notice? (Important: emphasize agency, not victimhood).
• What strategies seem most effective for communities affected by environmental conflicts?
• What connects our lives here to these conflicts happening elsewhere?
• What would need to change to address the root causes we identified?
• What can we do from where we are? What would we need to change in our own contexts?
• Why is it important to address environmental issues through a conflict and justice lens?

Summarise key insights:

• Environmental conflicts are global and interconnected.
• They have deep structural roots, such as economic systems, power imbalances and colonial legacies.
• Understanding root causes is essential for creating real change.
• Communities are actively resisting and organising; they are not passive victims.
• Peace and environmental sustainability are deeply connected.

5. Advice & notes

Creating a constructive learning atmosphere: This session addresses serious injustices and may evoke strong emotions, such as anger, guilt, feelings of helplessness or being overwhelmed. It is important to create space for these feelings while maintaining focus on understanding systems and possibilities for action.

Challenge victim narratives: If groups portray affected communities as passive victims, redirect the conversation by asking questions such as, “What forms of resistance or organising did you notice in this case? What strategies are communities using?” Highlight agency, resilience and collective action.

Watch out for oversimplified North–South binaries: While structural inequalities are real, avoid reinforcing stereotypes. Not all extraction takes place in the Global South, and not all consumption takes place in the Global North. Complexity matters.

This session pairs well with methods focusing on sustainable consumption, colonial histories, climate justice, non-violent resistance and exploring alternatives (e.g. degrowth, circular economy and indigenous knowledge).

6. Further information & materials

Case Study 1: Roșia Montană Gold Mining, Romania

In the heart of Transylvania's Apuseni Mountains lies Roșia Montană, a small Romanian town with a 2,000-year mining history dating back to the Roman Empire. However, since 1997, this historic community has been at the centre of Europe's longest environmental conflict — a battle between a Canadian mining corporation and local residents who are determined to protect their home.

Gabriel Resources, a Canadian-Romanian company, proposed the development of Europe's largest open-pit gold and cyanide processing operation. It would use an estimated 12,000 tonnes of cyanide per year to extract around 314 tonnes of gold and 1,500 tonnes of silver over 16 years. This would require the demolition of four mountain peaks, the destruction of the historic town centre (including centuries-old houses and Roman galleries), the displacement of over 2,000 residents, and the creation of a 600-hectare toxic waste lake.

- **The actors:** Gabriel Resources is backed by World Bank financing and supported by various Romanian government officials who have promised economic development and job creation. The company acquired mining licences and began purchasing properties, sometimes using aggressive tactics. In contrast, local residents formed Alburnus Maior, a grassroots organisation named after the Roman settlement. They were joined by Romanian and international environmental groups, as well as archaeologists concerned about irreplaceable Roman heritage. Eventually, they were also joined by thousands of urban protesters across Romania.

- **The Resistance:** What began as local opposition evolved into the largest environmental movement in Romania for decades. In 2013, over 20,000 people took to the streets of Bucharest every week in protests that were the largest since the fall of communism. The movement employed a variety of strategies, including legal challenges, heritage protection arguments, direct action and public awareness campaigns. Famous Romanian cultural figures, scientists and even the Romanian Orthodox Church joined the cause.

- **The consequences:** The conflict has deeply divided the community. While some residents sold their properties and left, others refused to do so despite facing economic hardship and pressure. The resulting uncertainty has devastated the local economy — people have been unable to invest in homes or businesses, young people have left, and the town has deteriorated. Meanwhile, the dispute damaged Romania's international reputation and created tensions between the government, corporations and civil society.

- **Current status:** In 2015, the Romanian parliament rejected the mining project amid unprecedented public pressure. In response, Gabriel Resources sued Romania for $4.4 billion in international arbitration courts, claiming lost profits. In 2021, however, the arbitration tribunal ruled largely in Romania's favour, dismissing most of the claims. In 2023, Roșia Montană was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, seemingly securing its protection. However, Gabriel Resources is continuing to fight the case in the courts, and local communities are remaining vigilant against any future attempts to revive the project.

Case Study 2: Marlin Mine, Guatemala

The Marlin Mine, Central America's first large-scale open-pit gold and silver mine, operated in the western highlands of Guatemala near the town of San Miguel Ixtahuacán from 2005 to 2017. However, what the Canadian company Goldcorp (later acquired by Yamana Gold) promised as economic development turned into a tale of environmental contamination, health crises and violations of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The mine extracted gold and silver using open-pit and underground methods, processing ore with toxic chemicals, including cyanide and mercury. At its peak, the mine produced around 250,000 ounces of gold each year. This required the use of large quantities of water in a region where Indigenous Mayan communities already faced water scarcity. The mine was built on land traditionally belonging to the Mam and Sipakapense Maya communities.

- **The Actors:** Goldcorp, one of the world's largest gold producers, operated the mine through its Guatemalan subsidiary, Montana Exploradora. The company had the support of the Guatemalan government, which granted licences without properly consulting the Indigenous communities, thereby violating international law which requires free, prior and informed consent. Those opposing the mine included local Indigenous communities, particularly women's organisations, who documented health impacts; the Catholic Church's Human Rights Office; international solidarity groups; and Guatemalan environmental organisations. Community leaders faced intimidation, criminalisation and violence for opposing the mine.

- **The Resistance and Consequences:** In 2005, local communities held a Consulta Comunitaria (community consultation), a traditional indigenous decision-making process, in which 98% of participants rejected the mine. However, the government ignored this decision. The communities organised protests, road blockades and legal challenges. In 2010, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights called for the mine to be suspended due to health and environmental risks, but Guatemala refused to comply.

  The consequences were devastating. Studies documented elevated levels of heavy metals in local water sources, as well as in the blood and urine of residents. Community members, particularly women and children, reported an increase in respiratory problems, skin diseases, miscarriages and birth defects. Agricultural lands were contaminated, affecting food security. The mine caused severe social division — some community members received compensation or jobs, while others received nothing, fracturing traditional community solidarity. Women faced particular hardship as the primary water collectors and agricultural workers.

- **Current status:** The mine officially closed in 2017 after extracting approximately 2.3 million ounces of gold and 10 million ounces of silver. However, the problems have not ended with closure. The company left behind contaminated tailings dams containing toxic waste, ongoing water contamination and unresolved health issues. Communities continue to demand environmental remediation, healthcare, and compensation. In 2022, Guatemala's Constitutional Court ruled that operating the mine violated the rights of indigenous peoples to be consulted — a historic but belated decision. Communities are now organising to prevent any attempt to reopen the mine and to hold the company accountable for the ongoing impacts.

Case Study 3: Fracking in Denton, USA

Denton, a university city of 140,000 people located 40 miles north of Dallas, became an unlikely battleground in America's fracking debate. In 2014, this progressive college town did something extraordinary when it became the first city in Texas to ban hydraulic fracturing within its boundaries. Although the victory was short-lived, it was symbolically powerful.

By the early 2010s, Denton was sitting on top of the Barnett Shale, one of the largest natural gas deposits in America. Over 270 active gas wells were operating within city limits, with some located just 200 feet from homes, schools and parks. Companies used hydraulic fracturing, a process involving the injection of millions of gallons of water mixed with sand and chemicals deep underground to fracture rock and release trapped gas. As companies perfected techniques to extract gas in densely populated areas, the city had become a laboratory for urban drilling.

- **The Actors:** On one side were major oil and gas corporations, including ExxonMobil, Devon Energy and Enervest. They were supported by the powerful Texas Oil and Gas Association, as well as the state government, which was dominated by oil industry interests. They portrayed fracking as vital for achieving energy independence, promoting economic growth, and safeguarding property rights. Opposing them was the Denton Drilling Awareness Group (DAG), a grassroots coalition of local residents, environmental activists, public health advocates and concerned parents. Notably, the group's leaders were ordinary citizens — teachers, stay-at-home parents and retirees — who became experts on drilling regulations and health impacts.

- **The conflict:** Residents reported constant noise and air pollution, as well as mysterious health problems such as headaches, nosebleeds and respiratory issues. They also expressed fear of groundwater contamination and an increased risk of earthquakes, which had become a major concern in the region. Children could not play outside near drilling sites. Property values declined. The smell of chemicals permeated neighbourhoods. DAG documented hundreds of complaints and health concerns while pushing for stricter regulations. When the city council proved unwilling to challenge the industry, DAG organised a citizen ballot initiative. After collecting thousands of signatures, the fracking ban appeared on the November 2014 ballot. However, the oil and gas industry spent nearly $700,000 — about $40 per vote — on opposition campaigns, outspending ban supporters by a factor of 10. They ran aggressive adverts claiming that the ban would cost jobs, harm the economy and violate property rights.

  Despite being massively outspent, 59% of Denton voters approved the fracking ban — a stunning grassroots victory that made international headlines. For a brief moment, local democracy had triumphed over corporate power in the heart of oil country.

The celebration lasted only months. In 2015, the heavily oil-industry-influenced Texas state legislature quickly passed House Bill 40, effectively nullifying Denton's ban by stripping cities of the authority to regulate oil and gas operations. Governor Greg Abbott signed it immediately. Denton's democratically enacted ban became legally meaningless. Facing expensive lawsuits from the industry, the city council had no choice but to repeal the ordinance.

- **Current status:** Fracking continues in Denton today, albeit under somewhat stricter local regulations than before the dispute. However, the battle had lasting impacts beyond Denton. It inspired anti-fracking movements across the United States, exposed the power imbalance between local communities and the fossil fuel industry, and demonstrated the potential and limitations of local democracy when it comes to confronting powerful economic interests. Community organisers from Denton now support other cities facing similar struggles.

Case Study 4: Hambach Forest and Rhineland Coal Mining, Germany

The Hambach Forest, located in the Rhineland region of western Germany, has become one of Europe's most iconic sites of environmental resistance. This small patch of ancient woodland is the battleground between activists and the world's largest open-pit coal mine. What started as a local conservation initiative has evolved into a symbol of climate justice and opposition to fossil fuels.

RWE, Germany's largest energy company, operates the Hambach mine — a massive open-pit lignite (brown coal) mine covering 85 square kilometres and reaching depths of 450 metres. Since 1978, the mine has consumed twelve villages and over 90% of the ancient Hambach Forest, one of Central Europe's oldest woodlands, which is around 12,000 years old. RWE had planned to clear the remaining forest in order to access an estimated 2.5 billion tonnes of lignite beneath it. Burning Hambach's coal would release enormous greenhouse gas emissions, making Germany's climate targets impossible to achieve, as lignite is the most carbon-intensive fossil fuel.

- **The Actors:** RWE wields significant economic and political power, employing thousands of people and providing energy to millions. The company was granted legal mining rights decades earlier and had the support of some regional politicians who were concerned about jobs. The North Rhine-Westphalia state government had long supported the company, prioritising energy security and employment.

Opposing them was a diverse coalition comprising local residents forcibly relocated from demolished villages, climate activists who have occupied the forest in elaborate treehouses since 2012, the mass civil disobedience movement Ende Gelände which organises thousands of people to block coal infrastructure, traditional environmental organisations such as BUND and Greenpeace, scientists who warn about climate catastrophe, and, increasingly, mainstream German society which is concerned about climate change.

- **The Resistance:** From 2012 onwards, activists occupied the Hambach Forest, building treehouses and other infrastructure to physically prevent deforestation. They established an autonomous zone, living sustainably while defending the forest. This attracted international attention, turning the occupation into a symbol of climate resistance.

The conflict escalated dramatically in 2018, when RWE announced plans to clear the forest that autumn. The police launched one of Germany's largest eviction operations, deploying over 3,000 officers, tanks, helicopters and special forces. The eviction was violent and controversial — a journalist fell from a tree house and died in disputed circumstances. However, the eviction backfired, with tens of thousands of people mobilising in response. In October 2018, over 50,000 protesters formed a human chain around the forest. Public pressure intensified.

Just as the clearances were about to begin, a court temporarily halted them, citing environmental concerns. Then, in a move that would prove pivotal, Germany's coal commission — established to plan the phase-out of coal — recommended ending coal use by 2038. Public opinion had decisively shifted against coal. Even RWE's shareholders questioned the project's viability in light of climate regulations and the declining economics of coal.

- **Current status:** In 2020, the German government passed a law setting 2038 as the date for ending coal use, and negotiated a deal with RWE whereby the remaining Hambach Forest would be preserved in exchange for compensation and permission to temporarily expand a different mine. While this was not a complete victory — some activists had demanded a n immediate coal exit — the forest was saved and Germany committed to a coal phase-out. However, the nearby village of Lützerath was demolished in early 2023 despite massive protests, showing that the struggle continues.

Case Study 5: Pagar Batu Village and Palm Oil Expansion, Indonesia

Pagar Batu is a small village in the Indonesian province of Jambi on the island of Sumatra. It represents thousands of similar communities across Indonesia and Malaysia that are caught between palm oil corporations and ancestral forest lands. The conflict here is emblematic of one of the world's most pressing environmental issues: the destruction of tropical rainforests to make way for palm oil plantations.

In the early 2000s, PT Asiatic Persada, a palm oil company and part of the Raja Garuda Mas Group, began establishing oil palm plantations on land that had been used by Pagar Batu villagers for generations for rubber tapping, collecting forest products and small-scale agriculture. The company obtained concessions from the Indonesian government to convert over 20,000 hectares of forest and community land into industrial palm oil plantations. Indonesia is the world's largest producer of palm oil, a vegetable oil found in half of all supermarket products globally, from cookies and cosmetics to biofuels, making it extraordinarily profitable.

- **The Actors:** Large palm oil corporations operate with the support of the Indonesian government, which actively promotes palm oil as an economic development strategy. These companies are granted legal concessions by the authorities, often without proper consultation with indigenous or local communities. International buyers, including major food corporations and traders, create demand for cheap palm oil while implementing voluntary sustainability commitments that often prove ineffective.
  Opposing these corporations are local and indigenous communities asserting customary land rights (adat), Indonesian environmental and human rights organisations such as Walhi and Sawit Watch, and international NGOs documenting environmental destruction and human rights violations. Community resistance is often led by farmers and indigenous peoples defending their livelihoods and cultural connection to the land.

- **The conflict:** Pagar Batu residents claim the land as their customary territory, which has been sustainably used by their ancestors for generations. However, they lack formal legal titles, which is a common situation in Indonesia where customary rights are poorly recognised. When the company began clearing land without community consent in the mid-2000s, the villagers organised a resistance movement. They occupied plantation areas, uprooted newly planted palm saplings and demanded recognition of their rights.
  In response, the company hired security forces and pursued criminal charges against community leaders for “trespassing” on land that was legally the company’s concession. Several villagers were arrested and imprisoned. Physical confrontations occurred. Women in the community played a particularly active role in the resistance, organising protests and facing arrest.

- **The consequences:** The plantation destroyed primary and secondary forests, eliminating biodiversity, including the habitats of critically endangered Sumatran tigers and elephants. It also contaminated water sources with pesticides and fertilisers. The community lost access to forest resources that were essential to their livelihoods, such as rubber, rattan, fruit and medicinal plants, causing economic hardship. Social cohesion fractured as some community members accepted jobs on the plantation, while others refused to cooperate with the company.
  Legally, the communities were in an impossible situation: under Indonesian law, the company held valid concessions, but under international human rights standards and Indonesian constitutional provisions recognising customary rights, the communities had legitimate claims. This legal ambiguity characterises thousands of land conflicts across Indonesia.

- **Current status:** After years of struggle, some progress has emerged. In 2013, international pressure and advocacy led to the company partially recognising community rights by returning some land and agreeing to avoid certain forest areas. However, most of the plantation remains operational and the community continues to advocate for the full recognition of their customary territory. Although Indonesia's 2013 Constitutional Court decision recognised indigenous forest rights, implementation remains slow and contested. Similar conflicts persist across Indonesia and Malaysia.

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Kathrin David based on YPAN Book of Peace Design and Informationsbüro Nicaragua e.V.

Read more:

Lederach, J.P. (2003). *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. Good Books.

Klein, N. (2014). *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*. Simon & Schuster

Environmental Justice Atlas: https://ejatlas.org/
- Interactive global map documenting 4000+ environmental conflicts

Indigenous wisdom as an alternative

1. General information

- **Thematic:** indigenous and local knowledge, development criticism, climate justice, intercultural understanding
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to articulate and critically reflect on their own concepts of what constitutes a "Good Life"
  - to understand the core principles and values of Buen Vivir as an Indigenous-rooted alternative to Western development models
  - to explore connections between Buen Vivir and climate justice
- **Number of participants:** 6-30 participants
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:**
  - acoustic signal
  - printed handouts for the group work
  - flipcharts, marker and tape

Link to SDG:
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13: Climate Action

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Interculturality and Diversity
- Recognizing Biases

2. Short description

This exercise invites participants to critically examine what constitutes a “Good Life” and to explore alternatives to the dominant Western models of development. The session introduces the concept of “Buen Vivir” (Living Well), an indigenous idea from the Andes region. Through visual mapping, participants explore the different dimensions of Buen Vivir and reflect on its relationship to climate action, environmental justice, and their own contexts.

3. Preparation

- Print the handout for the group work
- Familiarise yourself with the concept of “Buen Vivir” if necessary
- Prepare a simple flipchart as an overview of “Buen Vivir”

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction and Speed-Dating Dialogue (20 min)

Explain that the aim of the session is to explore the idea of a good life from a different perspective.

Arrange the participants in two circles, an inner and an outer, with the chairs facing each other so that participants sit in pairs. If there is an uneven number of participants, form one group of three. A standing set-up is also possible.

Allow three minutes per question and round. Use an acoustic signal to indicate when a round has ended and the outer circle needs to move one person clockwise and discuss the next question. Tell participants to ensure they both have space to talk and share.

• When you hear “Good Life,” what spontaneously comes to mind?
• Is what you imagine as a “Good Life” achievable? What would you need to make your vision a reality?
• Can you create a “Good Life” for yourself alone, or does your “Good Life” depend on other people and society as a whole?
• Is it enough if only you can live a “Good Life”, or should it be equally possible for everyone?
• Are people in your country, region or home living a “Good Life” today? Why or why not?

End with a brief reflection in the plenary to check with the participants which thought or part of the conversation stuck with them.

Step 2: Facilitator Input: introduction to Buen Vivir (5 min)

Give a brief introduction to the concept of Buen Vivir. Keep this short and brief to leave curiosity for participants to explore it.

Translation: “Buen Vivir” means “Good Living” or “Living Well” in Spanish
Origin: It comes from indigenous worldviews in the Andes region of South America, particularly in Ecuador and Bolivia.
Political context: Indigenous movements and social organisations have revitalised this concept as an alternative to Western development models that have caused environmental and social harm.
Core idea: The well-being of all people is inseparable from the well-being of nature and community.

Explain to participants that they will now explore the different dimensions of “Buen Vivir” through a visual mapping exercise.

Step 3: Group work: visual Mapping (30 min)

Form four groups and assign each group one of the following questions, along with the corresponding handout materials (see below).

Group 1: What does Buen Vivir encompass? What are its key elements?
Group 2: What are the indigenous foundations of the Buen Vivir concept?
Group 3: How does Buen Vivir view the environment and nature?
Group 4: What does Buen Vivir criticise about conventional concepts of "development"?

Provide the necessary materials (e.g. flipchart, markers, coloured pencils, sticky notes) and give participants 30 minutes to create a visual map in response to their question. Guide them by explaining that this could be a mind map, concept map, illustration or diagram — whatever helps them to communicate their ideas. Participants can combine text and visuals, and should aim to produce a creative representation of their topic.

Step 4: Group presentation (20 min)

Invite each group to give a brief presentation of their visual maps (3 minutes per group). Afterwards, the audience can ask questions or ask for clarifications.

Alternative: Organise a gallery walk by dividing the groups and mixing them so that each new group contains one member from each of the original groups. The groups then rotate and give short presentations about each other's posters.

Step 5: Debriefing (35 min)

• What aspects of Buen Vivir resonate with you? What feels challenging or unfamiliar?
• What was new or surprising?
• Could Buen Vivir contribute to stopping climate change and environmental destruction? How?
• How does the concept of Buen Vivir relate to your own ideas of a “Good Life” from our opening conversation?
• Where do you see tensions or contradictions between Buen Vivir and the way society currently functions in your community?
• Can you think of examples where ideas from Buen Vivir are already being practised, perhaps in your own community or other contexts you know?

5. Advice & notes

Avoid the romanticisation or stereotyping of indigenous peoples. Do not present Indigenous peoples as "living in harmony with nature" in a timeless and unchanging way. This perpetuates harmful colonial stereotypes.

Emphasise diversity: Buen Vivir draws on various Indigenous cosmovisions, such as Quechua sumak kawsay and Aymara suma qamaña, which differ from each other. Indigenous societies are diverse, dynamic and contemporary.

Acknowledge context: Buen Vivir was revitalised by political movements as a form of resistance against the development models that were imposed during the period of colonisation and that have continued through the process of economic globalisation. It is both ancient wisdom and a contemporary political project.

Be honest about implementation challenges. Even in Ecuador and Bolivia, where Buen Vivir is constitutional, governments continue to engage in extractive projects. There are contradictions between ideals and practice, and it is important to acknowledge this rather than presenting Buen Vivir as a perfect solution.

6. Further information & materials

Handout 1 - What does Buen Vivir encompass? What are its key elements?

Buen Vivir — called Sumaq Kawsayin the Kichwa language, meaning "good life" — is a concept rooted in the worldview of indigenous peoples in the Andean region of Latin America. It is fundamentally different from the Western idea of a "good life" based on material wealth and individual achievement, and cannot be realised in isolation. It only makes sense within a community, in relationships with other people, with the land and with all living beings. As Humberto Cholango, leader of CONAIE (the Ecuadorian indigenous federation), explains: "For us, the good life is about leading a lifestyle in harmony with nature and respecting others — not just people, but also the environment and animals, with whom we form a unity."
The concept does not separate politics, the economy, culture and social life into different categories: a piece of land (chacra), for example, has economic, cultural and social significance all at once. Buen Vivir means clean rivers, healthy food, fresh air and a strong community, not endless production or consumption.

Traditionally, the territory is understood as a living space that connects the past, present and future. This relationship to the land produces knowledge about sustainable land use, collective ethical behaviour and a lasting balance between people and nature. The foundation of this "harmonious or good life" is an egalitarian, solidarity-based, and reciprocal society.

Sources:

• Thomas Fatheuer, Buen Vivir: A Brief Introduction to Latin America's New Concepts for the Good Life and the Rights of Nature (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Ecology Series, Vol. 17), Berlin, 2011

• Alberto Acosta, El Buen Vivir. Sumak Kawsay: Una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos, Icaria Editorial, Barcelona, 2013

• CONAIE (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador): Propuesta de la CONAIE, frente a la Asamblea Constituyente, Quito, 2007. (primary source from the indigenous federation itself)

Handout 2: What are the indigenous foundations of the Buen Vivir concept?

Buen Vivir is not a new concept; it stems from the ancient worldviews (Kosmovisionen) of indigenous peoples in Latin America. To understand it, we need to understand how these peoples see and relate to the world.

In indigenous worldviews, the concept of development as a linear path from a worse past to a better future does not exist. Poverty is not understood as a lack of material goods, and wealth is not measured by how much someone accumulates. Instead, what matters is knowledge, shared experience, social and cultural recognition, and spiritual relationships between people and the natural world.

People do not see themselves as being at the centre of the universe, a concept known as anthropocentrism; instead, they see themselves as part of a larger whole. The Earth is understood as a living being, and its integrity is a right, just like human rights. There is not one single truth, but many truths depending on one's social and ecological context.

People in these cultures do not primarily think of themselves as individuals, but as communities, a concept expressed in several indigenous languages: Sumak Kawsay (Kichwa/Quechua), Suma Qamaña (Aymara) and Tekoporâ (Guaraní). In Bolivia, over half the population identifies as indigenous, and in Ecuador, nearly a quarter do so. Both countries have enshrined indigenous worldviews in their constitutions, making indigenous peoples active subjects, not just objects, of political and social change.

Sources:

• Alberto Acosta, El Buen Vivir. Sumak Kawsay: Una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos, Icaria Editorial, Barcelona, 2013

• Eduardo Gudynas and Alberto Acosta, "La Renovación de la Crítica al Desarrollo y el Buen Vivir como Alternativa al Desarrollo", Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana 16(53), 2011, pp. 71–83

• Eduardo Gudynas, "Buen Vivir: Germinando Alternativas al Desarrollo", América Latina en Movimiento No. 462, 2011

Handout 3: How does Buen Vivir view the environment and nature?

In the dominant Western worldview, nature has long been treated as something separate from humanity — a resource to be used, managed, and exploited. By defining nature as something "out there", separate from humanity, it became possible to subject it to human control and turn it into what is today called "natural capital".

Buen Vivir rejects this separation entirely. Humanity is part of nature, not above or outside it. This is not only a philosophical position; it has become law. In 2008, Ecuador adopted a new constitution that is one of the world's most progressive environmental frameworks.

For the first time in any national constitution, nature — referred to as both Naturaleza and Pachamama (the personified Mother Earth of Andean indigenous cultures) — was recognised as a legal subject with its own rights. Nature has the right to exist, to be maintained, and to regenerate its life cycles, structures, functions, and evolutionary processes. Crucially, these rights do not depend on nature's usefulness to humans. Nature has inherent value in itself.

The constitution also enables any individual, community or nation to request that public authorities enforce these rights. The protection of the natural world is therefore not left solely to governments — it becomes a shared civic responsibility for everyone.

**It is important to note that governments continue to engage in extractive projects, and that Buen Vivir cannot be seen as a perfect, universal solution. There are contradictions between ideals and practice, and these must be acknowledged.*

Sources:

• Alberto Acosta, El Buen Vivir. Sumak Kawsay: Una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos, Icaria Editorial, Barcelona, 2013.

• Eduardo Gudynas, “La ecología política del giro biocéntrico en la nueva Constitución de Ecuador,” Revista de Estudios Sociales, No. 32, 2009

Handout 4: What does Buen Vivir criticise about conventional concepts of "development"?

Buen Vivir offers a fundamental critique of the concept of "development" in Western societies. In indigenous worldviews, the concept of development as a linear process — progressing from an underdeveloped state to a more developed one — simply does not exist. There is no "underdevelopment" that needs to be overcome.

By contrast, in Western societies, economic activity, free markets and economic growth have been celebrated for decades as the foundation of a 'good life'. More production, more consumption, and higher GDP are treated as progress. In this framework, social advancement means the accumulation of technical knowledge and material wealth.

Buen Vivir challenges this logic at its roots. Well-being is not determined by material goods alone. Other values matter equally, or even more: knowledge and shared experience, social and cultural recognition, and ethical and spiritual values in the relationship between society and the natural world. Social progress in an indigenous context is not a fixed endpoint to be reached, but something that is continuously constructed and renewed through living together.

The current model of development also creates deep inequality. A small group of people enjoy a luxurious lifestyle while the majority work to maintain the privileges of that dominant group. Buen Vivir instead calls for a society "in which it is possible for everyone to have equal opportunities and chances, in which the individual and the collective coexist in harmony with one another and with nature, and in which the economic perspective is reconciled with ethical rationality and the common good" (Alberto Acosta).

Sources:
• Alberto Acosta, "Buen Vivir (Sumak Kawsay): An Opportunity to Imagine Another World", in: Miriam Lang & Dunia Mokrani (eds.), Beyond Development: Alternative Visions from Latin America, Transnational Institute/Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Amsterdam, 2013

• Eduardo Gudynas and Alberto Acosta, "La Renovación de la Crítica al Desarrollo y el Buen Vivir como Alternativa al Desarrollo", Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana 16(53), 2011

7. Read more & sources

Source: Developed by Kathrin David and adapted from *Informationsbüro Nicaragua e. V.* Educational Material *"Klimawandel und Umweltkonflikte"*

Read more: Acosta, A.(2013). *Buen Vivir: Vom Recht auf ein gutes Leben (German) / El Buen Vivir: Sumak Kawsay, una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos* (Spanish). Oekom Verlag / Icaria.

Who bears the burden of climate change?

1. General information

- **Thematic:** climate change, climate justice, recognising privileges, empathy, global systems of power and oppression
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to recognize the unequal distribution of the impact of climate change
  - to understand climate change as a justice and human rights issue
  - to reflect on the limitations of role-playing in connection with stereotypes and biases
- **Number of participants:** 10 - 30 participants
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:**
  - flipcharts, markers and paper
  - handouts with the roles
  - handouts with the statements
  - an open space (a corridor, large room, or outdoors) and calm music

Link to SDG:
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Non-Judgmental Relationships
- Nonviolence
- Practising Empathy

2. Short description

This exercise uses role-play to highlight the unequal impact of climate change. In a “stepping forward” activity based on statements about climate impacts and adaptive capacity, participants witness the growing distance between those protected from climate consequences and the most vulnerable groups. The session includes critical reflection on climate injustice, examining root causes, as well as the limitations of role-playing itself. Participants explore how climate change intersects with human rights, structural inequality and global power dynamics, reflecting on their responsibilities to prioritise justice in climate education.

3. Preparation

- Print the roles according to the number of participants and place them in a bowl/hat
- Prepare the space and the music
- Prepare the flipcharts for the reflection

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction to the activity (5 min)

Start the session with a gentle and grounding energizer to establish a calm atmosphere in the group (for example mindfulness exercises).

Explain to the participants that they will be involved in a role play. Each of them will have to imagine themselves as a person based on the role card they will receive.

Step 2: Receiving roles and getting into character (10 min)

Create a calm atmosphere. Dim the lights if possible and play soft background music or ask for complete silence.

Distribute the role cards. Each participant should draw a role card from a hat without showing it to others. Ensure that all roles are represented. Depending on the size of the group, some roles may need to be assigned to multiple people.

Ask participants to sit comfortably on the floor or in chairs and read their role card carefully. Before starting with the reading of the further questions and stepping deeper into the role, give a trigger warning.

Guide the group in building the character by reading the following prompts slowly and pausing for 30–45 seconds between each one to allow time for imagination. Ask the participants to write brief notes about the person they imagined on a small piece of paper (considering their appearance, feelings and daily life). Remind them they can write brief bullet points and it doesn't have to be long notes. They should keep this paper in their pocket — we'll return to it later.

• What was your childhood like? What sort of house did you live in? What games did you play? What work did your parents do?
• What is your everyday life like now? Where do you live? What does your home look like?
• How much money do you earn or have access to?
• What do you do for work or to make a living?"
• What do you do in your leisure time? What brings you joy? What worries keep you up at night?
• What excites you about the future? What are you afraid of?
• How do you experience weather and seasons? How does climate change affect your daily life?"

Step 3: Exploration of climate justice line (20 min)

Start by forming a line: Ask everyone to stand side by side in a line with enough space to move forward ten to twelve steps. Request absolute silence during this part.

Tell the participants that you are going to read out a list of situations or events. Each time they can answer "yes" to a statement, they should take a step forward. Otherwise, they should stay where they are and not move. Participants should respond based on their understanding of their role and their best judgement.

Read the statements clearly and slowly, pausing for 10–15 seconds after each one to allow time for movement.

In the end, ask participants to remain in their positions, look around and silently observe the distribution — who is at the front, who is at the back and who is in the middle.

Step 4: Revealing positions and roles (15 min)

Take a moment to acknowledge the situation by asking the participants:
• Take a moment to notice where you are and where others are. How do you feel about your position?
• If you are at the front, how does it feel to have moved ahead while others stayed behind? When did you first notice that others weren't moving with you?
• If you're still near the starting line, how does it feel to see others moving forward while you couldn't?
• If you're somewhere in the middle, what are you noticing?

Reveal roles: Starting at the back and moving forward, each person briefly reads aloud the life situation from their role card (just the description, no interpretation yet). Note which roles appear multiple times, and whether people with the same role ended up in different positions.

Step 5: First reflection and analysis (20 min)

Transition out of role: Before the conversation begins, lead the participants in a brief physical release activity (shake out, stretch and jump) to help them leave their characters behind.

• What surprised you during this activity?
• What patterns did you notice in who could and couldn't move forward?
• What did those who moved forward have in common? What about those who stayed behind?
• What was missing that prevented people from moving forward?

Analysis on flipcharts
Present three large flipcharts with the following headings:

• Exposure to impacts (who is most affected by climate/environmental changes?)
• Capacity to protect and adapt (who can protect themselves or absorb impacts?)
• Power to change the situation (who has the influence to address root causes?)

Ask participants to spend 10 minutes walking around the flipcharts and leaving notes. Tell them that they don't have to be quiet and that they can engage in discussions while writing.

When the time is up, move the flipcharts to the middle of the plenary and begin the final debriefing.

Step 6: Final debriefing (20 min)

• Were these differences clear to you before? What are your thoughts on them?
• Do we perceive these differences in our daily lives? Do they influence our thoughts on climate change?
• Can this situation continue? If so, what will happen?
• These roles represented individuals, but does this activity say something about global structures, human rights, and systems?
• How do economic inequality, colonial history, and power dynamics shape who suffers from climate change and who is protected?
• What needs to change? What can we change? What systemic conditions must shift?

Now transition into critical questions examining the problems with role-plays and the reinforcement of stereotypes.Ask participants to take out the papers on which they wrote notes about their role at the beginning. Ask them to talk to their neighbor about:

• Where did you get the information or knowledge you used to fill in your character's life? (Personal experience, news media, films, education or assumptions?)

After a short talk to their neighbor continue in the main group.

• Were you able to answer all of the statements with confidence, or did you have to guess? If you guessed, what did you base your answer on?
• Why do we know a lot about certain people and situations, but almost nothing about others? Whose stories are told and whose aren't?
• Did you rely on any stereotypes, such as "people in Africa are poor", "Americans consume too much" or "farmers are uneducated"? Where do these stereotypes come from?
• Power and stereotypes: How do stereotypes about people in the Global South (helpless victims) or Global North (privileged consumers) maintain existing power relations even when we're trying to talk about injustice?
• What role do we — as people with various privileges — have in climate justice movements?

Summarise the activity by saying that it helped us to experience inequality, but we must be critical of how we filled in the roles and recognise the limitations of imagining ourselves as others. Real climate justice requires listening to affected communities, not imagining their lives.

Emphasise that climate change is often framed as an environmental issue that affects everyone equally. This activity showed that this is false. Climate injustice is inseparable from economic inequality, colonial history, racism and global power structures.

5. Advice & notes

Know your group: This activity can trigger strong emotions and activate personal experiences of exclusion, discrimination, or marginalization. If any of your participants have experienced displacement, poverty or the impact of climate change first-hand, be prepared to support them. Consider whether any adaptations are needed.

Test the physical space: Ensure there is enough room for people to take 10–12 steps forward without crowding. If your space is limited, reduce the number of steps or conduct the activity outdoors. Remember to check that participants can hear you outside.

Connect individual experiences to systems: When participants describe what individuals lacked or had, always ask: "Why? What systems create these differences?" Push beyond "poverty" to "What creates poverty?" Beyond "location" to "Why do certain places face more climate risk?"
Make the link to human rights explicit. Those who cannot step forward often face human rights violations.

Common pitfall: Treating role play as an authentic experience.
If participants say things like "Now I understand what it's like to be a climate refugee", provide more context on the concept of empathy, emphasising that we cannot truly know another person's lived experience, especially when we have power and privilege that they lack. The point is to recognise our limitations and commit to listening to communities that are actually affected.

Follow-up: one option in this activity is to add or follow up with an introduction to Human Rights and link these themes more closely. Check the activity "Take a Step Forward from", Compass: Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People.

6. Further information & materials

Role Cards

Role 1: You are a 17-year-old member of a farming family with five children in rural Indonesia. Your family relies on the produce you grow to sell in a small local shop. Income is barely enough. If the next harvest fails due to drought or flooding, there won't be enough food or money for school. You dream of studying architecture, but it seems impossible.

Role 2: You live in a coastal village in Costa Rica. A logging company upstream is taking large quantities of water from the river. The groundwater level is dropping. Part of your crop is drying out. You have joined with other people in the area who have been affected to organise protest actions against the company. It's risky — the company has threatened legal action — but you feel you have no choice.

Role 3: You are a fast-food worker in the USA. You have lived there for three years and work very hard. The pay isn't high, but you can send some money back to your family. You were born in Nicaragua. A hurricane destroyed your house and the fields there. Realising there was no future for you there afterwards, you migrated to the USA. As an undocumented immigrant, you live in fear of deportation.

Role 4: You own a sugarcane plantation in Brazil. Business is good — sugarcane is in high demand, especially for producing agrofuels (biofuels) for Europe. However, this year's harvest was threatened by a long dry season and you lost a significant portion of your crop. To reduce your dependency on the climate, you are investing in artificial irrigation and drought-resistant varieties. You have the capital to adapt.

Role 5: You own a beachfront hotel in Costa Rica. Tourism is steadily increasing, particularly from the USA and Europe. In recent years, the rainy season has become shorter, providing longer periods of good weather for tourists. As your hotel is on flat land, you don't need to worry about landslides. Other natural disasters rarely affect you. Business is booming.

Role 6: You live in a small town in eastern Germany. The 2013 floods destroyed your house and many of your possessions. Your insurance has not yet fully covered the cost of replacing them. Until then, you had never felt threatened by natural disasters — you lived in Germany and were financially secure. Since then, you have been trying to rebuild your life step by step. You feel anxious about the future.

Role 7: You grew up on the North Sea coast and earn a living from fishing. Over the past few years, you have noticed a decline in fish stocks due to warming waters and overfishing. Because of this decline, the company you work for is making cuts. Finding a new job won't be easy — fishing is all you know, and coastal communities are economically depressed.

Role 8: You live in Madrid, Spain, and you manage a soy farming company in Brazil. You fly there twice a year for important negotiations, and work from Spain for the rest of the time. As a manager, you earn very well. However, increasingly heavy annual rainfall on your plantations in Brazil is causing problems for soy cultivation. This concerns you somewhat, but you have investments and insurance.

Role 9: You are 20 years old and have been involved with Greenpeace for a long time. You have recently started training/university studies in Paris. Your income doesn't allow for luxuries, but it's enough to live on and occasionally treat yourself, such as going on holiday to another country. You feel optimistic about making a difference, though sometimes the scale of the climate crisis can feel overwhelming.

Role 10: You are the owner of a large grain farm in Kansas, USA, which you manage as a corporation. Using large machinery and lots of fertiliser, you produce goods for the global food industry. However, changing climate patterns and an increase in tornadoes in recent years have affected your business and profits. But thanks to a government program, you were able to invest in diversifying crops. This provides better protection against harvest failures. You have political connections and lobbying power.

Role 11: You are a garment factory worker in Bangladesh. Your factory produces cheap clothing for European and American brands. The working conditions are dangerous and the wages are barely enough to survive. Recent flooding has destroyed your home in a nearby slum. Climate change is bringing more frequent cyclones and floods, but you have nowhere else to go and no resources to relocate.

Role 12: You are an indigenous leader defending your ancestral territory in the Amazon rainforest against illegal logging and mining. Your community has lived sustainably in this forest for generations. Climate change is altering the forest ecosystem, but deforestation by corporations poses an even greater threat. You have received death threats for your activism, and several of your fellow defenders have been murdered.

Role 13: You are a small-scale coffee farmer in Ethiopia. Your family has grown coffee for generations. However, changing rainfall patterns and rising temperatures are making coffee cultivation increasingly difficult. Last year's harvest was only half the size. You have no insurance, savings or government support. Your children may have to abandon farming altogether.

Role 14: You are a climate scientist working for a government research institute in Norway. Your work involves documenting Arctic ice melt and projecting future climate scenarios. You have a stable, well-paid job and enjoy a comfortable lifestyle. You fly internationally to attend conferences. Although you understand climate science intellectually, its impacts are largely absent from your daily life.

Role 15: You are a young climate activist in Australia. Bushfires are becoming more frequent and severe due to climate change. Your family's home was threatened by one last year. You have been arrested multiple times for protesting at coal export terminals. You are angry that older generations created this crisis, yet it is your generation that will suffer the most. You struggle with climate anxiety and despair.

Statements

• This year's extreme weather, including flooding, drought and heat, affects your daily life, but you have the resources to manage it without encountering any serious problems.
• You have access to clean, safe drinking water and don't need to worry about scarcity or contamination.
• Your home is built to withstand extreme weather events such as storms, floods and heatwaves.
• If climate change makes your current location uninhabitable, you have the financial means and legal ability to relocate.
• Despite unpredictable weather patterns, you can plan your life and livelihood for the coming months and years.
• When environmental problems affect you, you feel that decision-makers, such as the government and the media, listen to your concerns.
• Your livelihood or income is not directly threatened by changing weather patterns or environmental degradation.
• You have health insurance or access to healthcare in case you develop climate-related health problems such as respiratory issues, heat stroke or vector-borne diseases.
• You live in an area where the infrastructure (roads, electricity and water systems) is well maintained and resilient to the effects of climate change.
• Large-scale resource extraction or environmental destruction happens far from where you live, so you only learn about it through the news.
• You can afford to buy food, even when prices increase due to crop failures or climate-related shortages.
• You can choose to reduce your environmental impact by buying sustainable products and using renewable energy without it threatening your survival or basic needs.

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Kathrin David based on YPAN Peace Fellowship Toolkit and *Informationsbüro Nicaragua e. V.* (Educational Material *"Klimawandel und Umweltkonflikte"*)

Sustainability as a peace-building tool

1. General information

- **Thematic:** sustainability, peace education, culture of peace, active citizenship, environmental peacebuilding
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to understand the three pillars of sustainability (environmental, social and economic)
  - to identify potential conflicts arising from sustainability initiatives when power dynamics, equity and participation are not addressed
  - to apply Culture of Peace principles to transform sustainability work
- **Number of participants:** 6-30 participants
- **Time:** 100-110 min
- **Materials:** - flipcharts and markers
  - sticky notes

Link to SDG:
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Nonviolence
- Awareness of Existing Conflicts
- Peace with Nature
- Key concepts of Peace Education.

2. Short description

Sustainability initiatives are never neutral. They involve power, resources and competing interests. Peace education provides the tools needed to ensure that sustainability work does not reproduce injustice or create new conflicts. This session explores the connections between the dimensions of sustainability and the culture of peace framework. Through group work, case mapping and action commitments, it builds bridges between the two fields.

Participants leave with concrete approaches to integrating peace principles into environmental and development work.

3. Preparation

- Prepare the sustainability triangle/diagram on a flipchart
- Familiarize yourself with the Culture of Peace framework and be ready to give concrete examples
- Prepare culture of peace and violence
- Prepare the flipchart for the action commitments

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction to the session and facilitator input on sustainability (5 min)

Explain to participants that this session will explore the links between sustainability and peacebuilding. Begin by introducing the three pillars of sustainability using either a visual triangle or three overlapping circles on a flipchart.

- **Environmental sustainability:** Protecting ecosystems, natural resources and biodiversity for present and future generations.
- **Social sustainability:** Ensuring equity, human rights, health, education, and community well-being.
- **Economic sustainability:** Creating livelihoods and ensuring the fair distribution of resources and economic systems that serve all people and the planet.

Explain how sustainability requires balancing all three dimensions. In practice, however, sustainability initiatives either focus on just one pillar, neglecting or even harming the others, or find ways that contradict peace-building principles. Outline how this session will investigate how this can result in conflicts and how integrating peace principles can transform sustainability work into peace-building.

Step 2: Group work - Mapping task (25 min)

Explain to participants that this session will explore the links between sustainability and peacebuilding. Begin by introducing the three pillars of sustainability using either a visual triangle or three overlapping circles on a flipchart.

Divide the participants into three groups. Assign each group one of the three dimensions: environmental, social or economic. Provide each group with a large flip chart and markers.

Ask each group to map one example of an initiative within their assigned dimension. Give them examples on how they can look.

- **Environmental:** renewable energy projects, reforestation, wildlife conservation, recycling programmes
- **Social:** community health clinics, education programmes, women's cooperatives, youth employment
- **Economic:** microfinance, fair trade, local markets, social enterprises

Encourage specificity: Instead of writing "renewable energy", write "community solar farm in rural village in X" or "wind turbines in coastal area of X".

Groups should then analyse where conflicts could arise from these sustainability initiatives.

Guiding questions to write down and share:
• Where could conflicts emerge from these initiatives?
• Who might oppose them and why? (stakeholders, beneficiaries)
• What competing needs or interests exist?
• Might this initiative create new inequalities or injustices?
• Which environmental, social and economic needs intersect here? Where do these needs compete? Where might they align?

Examples to prompt thinking:
• **Environmental conflicts:** Protected areas evicting indigenous communities, wind turbines disturbing local residents or wildlife etc.
• **Social conflicts:** An employment programme favours certain groups; a housing project causes gentrification.
• **Economic conflicts:** A factory that provides jobs but pollutes the environment; tourism development that excludes local businesses

Bring them back after 25 minutes. In the best case they are close to each other and each work on their own space or own table.

Facilitate a short debriefing and checking how this process went.

Step 3: Weaving Peace Principles (30 min)

Present the culture of peace and culture of war principles. (If there is more time you can also ask participants to place them)

- **Column I:** culture of peace and non-violence
- **Column II:** culture of war and violence

Groups return to their flipchart
Tell participants to take the idea of a culture of peace with them.

Ask the participants to look at the conflict flashpoints identified and redesign the initiative to embody the principles of a culture of peace. How could this project be designed to build peace rather than create conflict? Ask them to mention specific Culture of Peace principles and explain how these can be integrated.

For example: Wind turbines disturbing local residents or wildlife etc.
- Education for culture of peace (environmental education program in school)
- Democratic participation
- Community based dialogue process

Give them 20 minutes for this.

Step 4: Group Presentations (15 min)

Invite each group to give a brief presentation of their redesigned project (3 minutes per group). Afterwards, the audience can ask questions or ask for clarifications.
Or in a short version: Ask each group to name the peace principles they used to redesign the initiative.

Step 5: Debriefing (15 min)

• What are your most impactful takeaways from this session?
• What surprised you about the connections between sustainability and peace?
• What patterns did you notice across the redesigned initiatives? Which peace principles appeared most important?
• Can you spot any of the SDG in the principles of culture of peace?
• How does integrating peace principles change the meaning of “sustainability”?
• Can sustainability be a peace-building tool? What is needed for this?

Step 6: Optional - Action commitments (10 min)

If time allows, conclude with personal action planning. Invite participants to reflect silently on these prompts (display them visually):

What is a local sustainability initiative I can bring a conflict-sensitive approach to?
What is one small step?

• What conflict or tension related to sustainability exists in your community or work context?
• How could an integrated, conflict-sensitive approach transform it?
• What's one conversation you could start to bring different stakeholders together?
• What peace-building skills or knowledge do you need to develop to do this work?

For example: I want to build my skill in conflict-sensitivity to bring it to my work context. I want to check with the local environmental NGO on their approach to the local polluted river.

Participants pair up and share:
One concrete action they will take in the next month and what support or accountability they need.

Afterwards, both partners write their commitments on sticky notes and add them to a flipchart titled "Culture of Peace Sustainability Action" This creates collective accountability and inspiration.

5. Advice & notes

Encourage the use of specific, concrete examples throughout the group work and avoid abstract generalisations.

Encourage groups to identify both the winners and losers of sustainability initiatives, as this reveals power dynamics.

During redesigns, challenge groups to explain how peace principles are integrated, rather than just stating that they are.

Celebrate creative solutions while also acknowledging real-world constraints and challenges.

Including the action and commitment mapping section can be very beneficial. This allows for more specific reflection and a greater sense of empowerment in relation to the question: What is my role in this?

6. Further information & materials

CULTURE OF WAR AND VIOLENCE	CULTURE OF PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE
Belief in power that is based on force	Education for a culture of peace
Having an enemy	Understanding, tolerance and solidarity
Authoritarian governance	Democratic participation
Secrecy and propaganda	Free flow of information
Armament	Disarmament
Exploitation of people	Human rights
Exploitation of nature	Sustainable development
Male domination	Gender equality
Hierarchical authority	Dialogue, participation, consensus building
Institutionalised competition	Conflict transformation and cooperation

This handout is inspired by the UN Declaration on a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence (website by David Adams)

(Based on page 44 of the Book of Peace Design, adapted)

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Kathrin David inspired by ESD frameworks and the Book of Peace Design by YPAN

Sustainable development: checklist

Activities in line with principles of Education for Sustainable Development

- ☐ Are designed to empower learners as agents of change, not passive recipients of information;
- ☐ Encourage critical thinking that questions assumptions, power dynamics and examines root causes;
- ☐ Connect local actions and decisions to global systems and their consequences;
- ☐ Foster hope, agency and emotional engagement;
- ☐ Ensure room to practice active, deep and non-judgemental listening, as well as communicating with empathy, understanding, and respect;
- ☐ Develop the ability to reflect on one's own thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes (self-reflection);
- ☐ Ensure equitable access and inclusion, particularly for marginalised and vulnerable groups, while recognising own biases in the process;
- ☐ Create opportunities for dialogue across differences and perspectives;
- ☐ Enable learners to imagine and work toward sustainable and peaceful futures for all;
- ☐ Connect sustainability education to peace, human rights and conflict sensitivity.

Environmental peacebuilding

02

Environmental peacebuilding: concept

You don't need Christopher Nolan's film to show it. Most of us saw that image before: the explosion, the cloud, the after-wave, the landscape left behind. But the question that environmental peacebuilding asks is not about the explosion: it's what comes after.

What happened to the soil? The water? To the animals and vegetal life? and the communities who lived in a landscape that (within seconds) became toxic from a conflict on its ending?

We tend to think of peace as a moment: a ceasefire, a signature, a handshake. But a river that became contaminated by war does not know it ended. The forest burned doesn't regrow. The communities that got displaced cannot go back, as there is nothing left for them in a place they once called home.

Peace goes in multiple spaces, and the environment is one of them. Here we invite you to discover a, quite new, field of study in the peacebuilding world.
The first question is: what is environmental peacebuilding?

What is environmental peacebuilding?

What is “environmental peacebuilding”?

Environmental peacebuilding is the management of environmental issues in ways that can help prevent conflict, resolve disputes, reduce violence, and support recovery after conflict has occurred. It is the interconnection between: peace, conflict, and the natural environment.

Fact: This concept was first mentioned by the United Nations in 1992 at the Conference on Environment and Development which linked environmental challenges with peace and development.

So, the core definition after many years of debates is:

- *Environmental peacebuilding aims to find ways in which humanity can live peacefully and equitably on a living planet that can sustain us and future generations. It uses shared environmental interests to bring people together (across borders, identities, and histories) to share information and act collectively in that shared interest.*

In our peer-to-peer words:

- **Environmental peacebuilding seeks to build positive peace by emphasising the use of shared environmental interests to bring people together to share information and act in that shared interest.**

The three pillars of environmental peacebuilding

1. Peace: not just the absence of war, but the presence of justice, equity, and human rights for all (including plant and animal life).

2. Conflict: disagreements and tensions, which environmental factors can both trigger and resolve.

3. The natural world: ecosystems, resources, and climate systems that human communities depend on to survive.

On the second point, environmental peacebuilding supports four key stages of the conflict cycle:

- **Prevention** -> stopping environmental disputes from becoming violent conflicts
- **Resolution** -> using environmental cooperation to help end ongoing conflicts
- **Reduction** -> lowering the intensity or spread of conflict through environmental management
- **Recovery** -> rebuilding communities and ecosystems after conflict has ended

Dates to remember (if you are into history)

1949	**Geneva convention**	International law gave rights for civilians in conflicts.
1977	**Additional protocol to Geneva convention**	First recognition of natrual environment protection during war. The beginning of our topic.
1992	**UN Conference on environment and development**	Finally the environment, peace and development got linked. The birth of environmental peace-building.
2021	**UN rapporteur on human rights and climate change**	The UN formally begins to work at the intersection of human rights and climate with its first rapporteur.
2023	**Loss and Damage found established (COP28)**	First time wealthy nations formally commit to compensating climate-vulnerable countries for irreversible climat impacts.
2024	**UN resolution on the right to a healthy environment**	The UN Geeral Assembly strengthens the legal framework connecting environmental rights and human rights.

The PSC Nexus: peace, sustainability and climate-security

Environmental peacebuilding connects closely to what the academy calls the PSC Nexus: the relationship between peace, sustainability, and climate security. This concept is developed in depth in *Navigating the Complexity across the PSC-Climate Security Nexus* by Bernard Amadei.

Sustainability

Ensuring that communities manage resources in ways that can support present and future generations without draining natural systems.

Peace

Achieving stable, just societies free from violence. Both negative peace (absence of violence) and positive peace (presence of justice and equity).

Climate-security

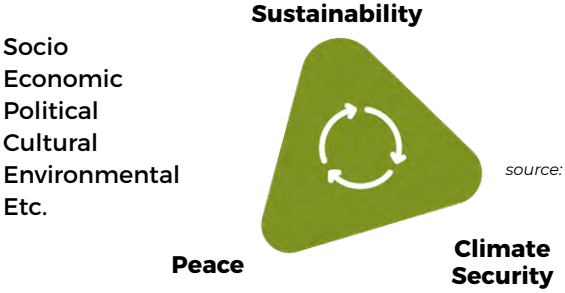
Protecting communities from climate-related threats that can destabilise societies, trigger migration, and spark conflict over lack of resources.

Why we believe this nexus theory is important

- It is hard to imagine a **sustainable** community that is not stable and climate-secured.
- A **peaceful** community that has not implemented and integrated practices sustaining livelihoods and the environment.
- Or a **climate-secured** community that is geopolitically unstable. The three are mutually dependent. Working and impacting one is a support on all others.

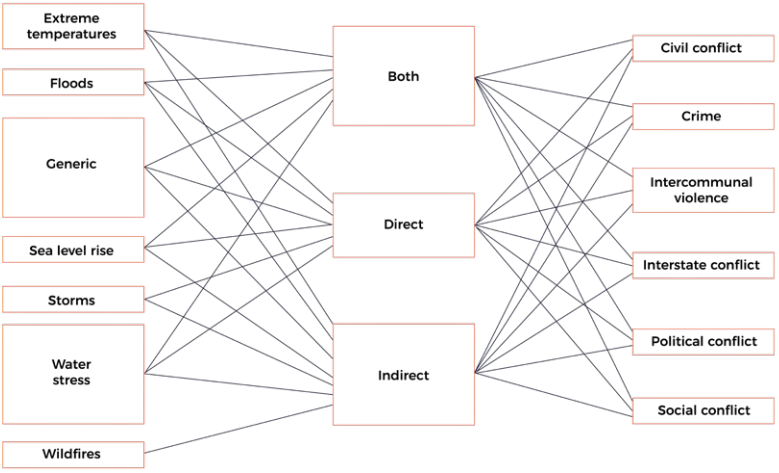
The PSC Nexus

Peace, Sustainability and Climate Security



source: Bernard Amadei - PSC nexus

The PSC Nexus framework also helps us understand the specific paths in which climate change generates conflict. The table below summarises this relationship:



Benefits, risks and tools

Like any field of practice, environmental peacebuilding has real strengths, but also complicated risks that everyone must take seriously, or at least, think critically. This table is our honest overview of it:

Benefits

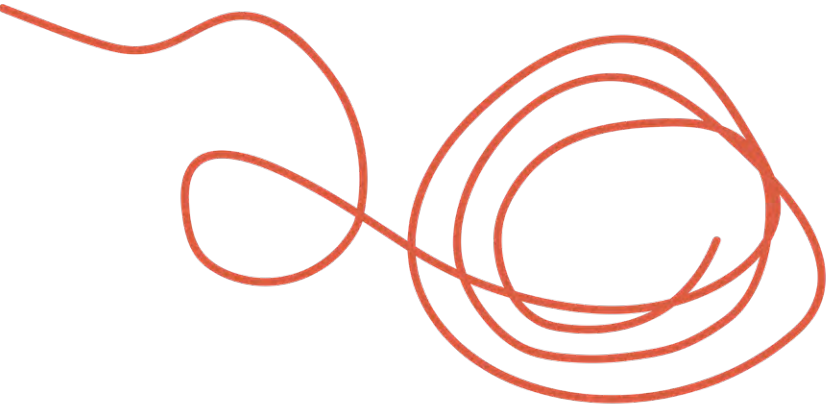
- Reduction of environmental problems
- Brings certainty with dialogue
- Encourages cooperation + natural resource management
- Addresses inequality (roots of sustainable peace)
- Prevents future conflicts

Risks

- May increase discrimination
- Militarisation of natural resources
- Displacement of communities
- Global solutions ≠ local realities
- Northern solutions for Southern problems
- Funding may be cost-inefficient or marginalise groups
- Solutions can be non-eco-friendly

How to do it?

- Monitoring systems
- Evaluation
- Specific programs
- Legislation (local and international)



The tip of the iceberg: let's talk about climate migration

One of the most visible and politically used consequences of climate change is the movement of people. Climate migration is the movement of a person or groups of people who are obliged or choose to leave their chosen place of residence, temporarily or permanently, for impacts on the environment due to the climate crisis.

- Some numbers to remember:

  23.7 million displacements of people within their own countries were recorded in a single year due to extreme weather events like floods, storms, and droughts.
  By 2050, models project up to **1 billion climate refugees**, mostly from countries that are highly vulnerable to climate change.

  There are two kinds of displacement:

- **sudden-onset events:** storms, floods or wildfires. People displaced usually remain nearby and most return within three months. But repeated shocks make them less willing to return.

- **slow-onset events:** droughts, desertification or salinisation from sea-level rise. These push seasonal rural-urban migration, often becoming permanent. It happens mostly within countries, but cross-border movement is growing.

The butterfly effect: the Arab spring and Syria

Climate migration is not an isolated event: it is a chain reaction. This example from Syria* shows how one environmental impact can add to a full-scale war:

- 2010: Extreme heat in Russia destroys crops, causing global cereal prices to spike.
- Rising food prices + political injustice ignite the Arab spring protests across the region.
- Desertification in Syria: 800,000 people lose their income. 85% of livestock dies. 1.5 million syrians move to cities from the agricultural lands.
- War begins. 6.6 million people are forced to flee Syria entirely.

*For obvious reasons, we cannot say that the Syrian war was due only because of environmental impacts (it would be avoiding all the geopolitics at the moment), but science and academia found that this impact added to the whole conflict.

Environmental Peacebuilding in practice (study case)

Environmental peacebuilding is ongoing research in which we can all take part. We are bringing you one study case and some examples to use. We really hope these are the seeds for your learning into the world of peacebuilding and the environment.

The Virunga national park: Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda

With this toolkit being named APE, we wanted to bring our most inspiring study case. Few places on Earth can show the connection between nature, conflict, and peace more amazingly as the Virunga mountains in Central Africa. The home to over half of the world's remaining mountain gorillas.

The background
The Virunga region touches three countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda. The three of them have experienced devastating conflict such as the the Rwandan genocide and decades of armed group activity in eastern DRC. The national park is, then, at the centre of this instability, and the gorillas within it have repeatedly found themselves caught in the middle of the conflict.

The issue
The gorillas know no borders, but their power to attract tourists and researchers, and the money that comes with them, is not neutral. That simple economic tension has, over time, developed into disputes and even violent confrontations between countries and local communities who depended on the same animal.

Our environmental peacebuilding in action

After a mediation and common ground tools appeared: transboundary conservation agreements, ranger cooperation programmes, and community-based ecotourism. These created the economic incentives for peace: jobs, income, and international support that depend on stability. Protecting the gorillas means protecting livelihoods. Protecting livelihoods means reducing the conditions that fuel conflict (do you see the nexus working here?).

The lessons

A shared animal species became a shared reason to cooperate. The gorillas did not resolve the DRC's political crises, but they created a space where communities could sit together, and a set of ideas that made dialogue worth a try. That is environmental peacebuilding.

Extra examples for your curiosity

- **Afghanistan: neutral diplomacy**
  An NGO found a creative way to open dialogue with the Taliban government about civil problems: starting conversations around football and environmental concerns. This shows us how neutral topics can build trust.
- **Grenada Island: climate financial insurance**
  One of the first states to develop a financial insurance mechanism specifically designed to overcome potential climate-related conflicts and disasters was Grenada Island. They are already mobilising people to leave their houses in the coast to go to the interior.
- **Ecuador and Perú:** Cordillera del Cóndor peace park
  The creation of a shared peace park along a historically disputed border. It transformed a conflict zone into a space for dialogue, conservation, and bilateral cooperation.
- **Maloti Drakensberg transfrontier project (2007)**
  South Africa and Lesotho collaborated on the sustainable management of shared mountain resources, building on the sustainability of the region.
- **India and Pakistan:** the Indus basin initiative (2021)
  These countries renewed agreements to co-manage the Indus river water flow, reviving diplomatic channels through a shared environmental and water security interest.

A final note: environmental peacebuilding is a (quite) new field of research and practice. We invite you to go and discover the newest examples and inspirations that were added in the past years. Or use this invitation to become active in adding this topic into your peacebuilding training or practice.

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Environmental peacebuilding activities

02

Rapid response: environmental-security analysis

1. General information

- **Thematic:** climate change, conflict analysis, environmental peacebuilding, climate-security nexus
- **Learning objectives:**

  - to understand the link between climate change, conflict and the natural world
  - to analyse a real or local conflict using a climate-security lens
  - to identify key stakeholders, risks, and vulnerabilities that can impact in our environmental peacebuilding project
  - to develop possible future scenarios and responses that are sustainable for the peacebuilding efforts
- **Number of participants:** 10-25 participants
- **Time:** 60 - 90 min
- **Materials:** - printed rapid environmental-security risk assessment template
  - flipcharts/paper
  - markers

Link to SDG:
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Peace with Nature
- Comprehensive Conflict Analysis

2. Short description

This workshop showcases a rapid environmental-security analysis in a practical process. Participants explore a real or local conflict and assess how climate change impacts interact with social, political, economic and community factors. They identify risks, stakeholders, and possible future scenarios, building their ability to analyse and respond to complex environmental conflicts and develop inclusive and sustainable projects that can act on the environmental impacts.

3. Preparation

- Print the Rapid Environmental-Security Risk Assessment questions (see point 6)
- Ask participants in advance to think of a local or regional conflict
- Prepare flipcharts for group work
- Optional: provide one example case if participants have difficulties in finding a conflict, although it will be more impactful to work on their own local one.

4. Implementation

Step 1: Explanation and introduction to the assessment (10 min)

Explain the link between environment and conflict. Present the Rapid Environmental-Security Risk Assessment (questions such as conflict history, actors, climate impacts, risks, etc.)

Step 2: Choose - Individual or group work (30-40 min)

If you chose individual work:
• give participants 15-20 minutes to work on their assessment
• once done, unite participants in small groups, so they share their assessment in 10-20 more minutes.

If you chose group work:
• unite participants in small groups (2 to 4 people)
• each group selects a conflict (local, regional, or global)

Note

• Choose individual work if: you want each participant to practice this analysis on their own, with their local/regional conflict and for more in-depth findings.

• Choose group work if: you want to build collaboration in the development of an analysis, finding other voices/comments, integrating feedback and giving the tool a test.

All participants or groups need to complete an assessment, including:
• Key conflict issues and actors
• Climate impacts
• Vulnerabilities and mechanisms
• Conflict-sensitive areas
• Future scenarios (best / worst / most likely)

Step 3: Group presentations (15-20 min)

Each group presents their analysis and key findings.

Try to keep it short or ask them for a specific point of their analysis (i.e. the future scenarios or actions to take).

Step 4: Debriefing (10-20 min)

• What surprised you in your analysis? Was it easy to prepare the assessment?
• How does the environment influence conflict dynamics?
• What role can individuals or communities play?
• How can this analysis serve our peacebuilding actions?
• Can it be used in a short or long-term programme or training? Why?
• How does this activity connect to SDGs?

Step 5: Pin the map (optional)

Ask participants to put a pin in the map in the place where their conflict took place, and ask them to put a thread to the assessment they wrote. This can give a very artistic and visual poster of the conflicts and assessments of the group.

5. Advice & notes

• Encourage participants to choose realistic and relevant conflicts, try to avoid very big conflicts or ongoing conflicts. Remind them this is pilot work, not a real deliverable.

• Participants may find it difficult to choose a conflict situation, especially if they are not used to reflecting on conflicts. Some may get stuck or feel unsure what to select, so give them enough time or support them with an example.

• In groups, participants often spend too much time sharing the background story. Keep time during group work to avoid overload or overthinking.

• Tell participants to think about the answers, not perfect solutions. We are looking for the process, not the outcome.

• Remind participants that climate/environment is often a multiplier, not the sole cause of conflict (as seen in the theory with the butterfly effect in Syria).

• Finally, tell participants that this is a simple Rapid response environmental-security analysis, but peacebuilding teams are working on them / using these guiding questions to build the responses on the groundwork.

6. Further information & materials

Rapid Climate-Security Risk assessment in _____ [add your local place]

- What is the **history** of the conflict in the area?
- What are the **key conflict issues** and how long have they been going on?
- Which **groups of people** are involved?

- What issues (e.g., caste, tribe, occupational affiliation, access to resources) **divide** these groups and what connects them (e.g., shared cultural practices, local peace initiatives)?

- What are the key climate change **impacts**?
- How are climate risks **managed**?
- What are the **coping mechanisms**?
- What is the **relationship** between those affected by conflict and those affected by climate risks?

- Where are the **conflict-affected** areas?
- Where are the **climate-sensitive** areas?

- Does conflict **get worse** at any particular time or period (e.g., time of day, season, during elections, during religious festivals)?
- Are these periods **linked** to environmental challenges?

- What are the best, worst, and **most likely scenarios** for the future of the conflict?

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Jorge Aguado Sánchez based on the UNEP report *"From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment"*.

Read more:

• United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). (2009). *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment*. UNEP.

Welcome to Kontanu!

1. General information

- **Thematic:** climate migration, migration, geopolitics understanding
- **Learning objectives:**

  - to have a first-hand experience of the situations that happen in a conflict originated in the climate change impacts;
  - to understand the complexity of finding solutions - to conflicts affected by the lack of resources;
  - to find ways of collaboration between diverse stakeholders, including the groups that are against each other;
- **Number of participants:** 20 participants
- **Time:** 60 - 90 min
- **Materials:** - printed papers
  - stickers “Hello, I am...” with new identities

Link to SDG:
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 15: Life on Land
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Awareness of Existing Conflicts
- Interculturality and Diversity
- Peace with Nature
- Conflict Transformation
- Conflict Sensitivity

2. Short description

Welcome to the territory of Kontanu! This interactive role-play simulation places participants in a fictional country facing climate-induced resource scarcity and rising social tensions. Taking on the roles of different stakeholders, such as government representatives, local communities or the fisherman/farmers, participants explore the complex links between climate change, migration, and conflict.

Using negotiation skills, participants must develop and present solutions to a growing crisis over water access, while navigating political, social, and environmental challenges. The exercise fosters critical thinking, empathy, and a deeper understanding of how climate impacts can drive conflict and require collective action.

3. Preparation

For this scenario exercise you will need to print a series of papers to share with the groups. These are the characters of the scenario. Feel free to alter the documents so it supports your training/workshop exercise.

- Government of Kontanu
- Traditionalist Political Party in opposition to the Government of Kontanu
- International organization
- Government of Maki
- Youth action association
- Farmer
- Fishermen

Check materials in section 6.

4. Implementation

Step 1: Present the scenario (5 min)

You live in Kontanu, a country with 25 million people. The economy is based on agriculture, farming and fishing. One of the most important assets of this country is a lake in the East that is being shared with the neighbouring country of Maki. In the last few years, part of the population in the East decided to move to Maki to search for new opportunities.

In Kontanu, there is a division in the communities between the ones who practice Christianity which represents 60% of the population, and the Muslims, which represent 40%.

In the past years, the rise of temperatures and the lack of rain made the water of the lake drop drastically. It has lost 95% of its surface water in the past 50 years.

In the last months, the fisherman and the farmers started to fight for access to water in the lake. The conflict escalated violently as there have been reports of intentional fires in houses in different communities.

Step 2: Group work and introduction (10 min)

Unite participants in groups of 2 people. If the group is big, make 3 people join the fishermen or the farmers groups).

Give the participants the document you prepared with the information about who they will represent in this scenario.

Step 3: Crafting solutions (35-45 min)

Explain that they will have 30 minutes to bring 3 solutions. They will need to present the solutions at the end of the 30 minutes in an International World Organization (IWO)'s conference (clearly a made-up organization, you can put any other name)
They need to find their spokesperson/s.

While they talk among themselves and with other groups, feel free to:
• Prepare the World Conference space
• Build-up the challenges in the scenario: raise the taxes, announce that there has been a climate disaster or that there has been a coup and the Kontanu government has been replaced. There are many options to bring chaos to the scenario (as real life is).
• Use your recorded voice or even AI to prepare a radio news announcement, this would give more reality to the situation.
• Look how people behave, take notes, notice what happens and what is missing.

Step 4: Closing the scenario (10-20 min)

Ask them to present the three solutions in the World Conference.
Afterwards: Ask participants to step out of the role.

Step 5: Debriefing (10-20 min)

• Were you surprised by the solutions? Did they reflect the position of the person you were playing?
• How much influence do you think you (in your role) had on the result?
• Did interaction with other people or groups make you alter your approach or your attitude towards the problem?
• How easy was it to identify with your role? Why or why not?
• Do you think that this situation could arise in real life? Can you think of any similar cases?
• How would you react if this case arose in your town/place of residence? Did the activity change your attitude?
• What do you understand about the need to protect natural resources?
• Do you know of any cases in history (or today) where this has been happening?
• Why do you think about natural resources and conflict?
• Why do you think about the impact in communities?
• How can this exercise help us understand how to act in similar situations?

5. Advice & notes

• Create a respectful space, as the topic involves conflict and sensitive issues. Beware there may be people who may have lived these situations or are trauma-sensitive. We recommend you let people know about the aim of the workshop beforehand.

• Encourage participants to engage fully in their roles, but remind them to step out of character during debriefing. This can be done by body shaking techniques or a short energizer.

• Adapt the complexity and be flexible: add events (i.e. climate disasters, political changes) if the group is ready. If you see they are having difficulties, it is the right level for them. If the participants find the solutions too fast, add an extra complexity in the process.

• Observe group dynamics and focus on the process, not only the final solutions. If the group is too big, add one special card for an "international observer" and give it to one participant.

• Add roles or create new ones, also for yourself. You can become the Secretary General of the International World Organization (IWO).

• Use the debrief to connect the activity with real world issues like climate change, migration, and conflict.

• Link to reality: This scenario is inspired by the Lake Chad crisis and conflicts over resources between Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.

6. Further information & materials

Handouts

- **Government of Kontanu**

Government of Kontanu: You are very worried about the bad publicity that this conflict over the lake has been attracting, and you would like to attract the attention of international organisations to invest funds in solving it. You do not have a budget to spend on this issue, as there are other matters to prioritise in the country.

You have been summoned to a 30 minute meeting. On this meeting you may encounter with representatives of:
• The fisherman
• The farmers
• The opposition party
• An international organisation
• Youth Action Association
• The Government of Maki

Commonly, you need to find 3 solutions to the conflict happening in the lake.

Traditionalist Political Party in opposition to the Government

Traditionalist Political Party in opposition to the Government: You represent the Political Party of Kontanu which was in power 3 years ago. Things were not so violent when you had power, and now you use all the arguments to strongly oppose the Government. You believe the conflict between fishermen and farmers has a religious and identity background, and water is just an excuse to use violence. You feel that fishermen and farmers' families are privileged to make a living from the lake resources, and they should not engage the national resources for their own benefit.

You have been summoned to a 30 minute meeting. On this meeting you may encounter with representatives of:

- The fisherman
- The opposition party
- An international organisation
- Youth Action Association
- The Government of Maki
- The Government of Kontanu

Commonly, you need to find 3 solutions to the conflict happening in the lake.

International organization

Representative on the International organisation: your organisation has an office in the capital of Kontanu, and you run activities with the local community. You are aware of the conflict and its escalation, but you have little funds, and even if you had more - you are not clear if the mandate of the organisation allows for any interventions in the conflict. You want to engage with the Government for more funds, but also your moral as an international authority aims to mediate between fishermen and farmers.

You have been summoned to a 30 minute meeting. On this meeting you may encounter with representatives of:

- The fisherman
- The farmers
- The opposition party
- Youth Action Association
- The Government of Maki
- The Government of Kontanu

Commonly, you need to find 3 solutions to the conflict happening in the lake.

Government of Maki

Government of Maki: You have already agreed to accept a few thousand migrants from Kontanu. But you have been very worried by complaints from your citizens who are afraid that Kontanu citizens will take their jobs and spread violence in Maki. You are also concerned about your seat in the next council elections, so you want to show citizens you will protect them from external dangers.

You have been summoned to a 30 minute meeting. On this meeting you may encounter with representatives of:

- The fisherman
- The farmers
- The opposition party
- An international organisation
- Youth Action Association
- The Government of Kontanu

Commonly, you need to find 3 solutions to the conflict happening in the lake.

Youth Action Association

Members of the Youth Action Association in Kontanu: Your group was set up to address some of the worst problems of the lake in Kontanu. You are proposing and lobbying for various solutions to the escalation of violence, including a cut of emissions, but you feel decision-makers ignore your voice. You are concerned that other social problems may be neglected by the Government if they have to contribute to solving the conflict over the lake. Additionally, the youth budget over the past 5 years has been cut to a level where you have difficulties getting any funds from the Government of Kontanu.

You have been summoned to a 30 minute meeting. On this meeting you may encounter with representatives of:

- The fisherman
- The farmers
- The opposition party
- An international organisation
- The Government of Maki
- The Government of Kontanu

Commonly, you need to find 3 solutions to the conflict happening in the lake.

Farmer

Farmers of Kontanu: You are worried about the conflict and its impacts on your farming. Your family has been living next to the lake for generations, but already a few of your family members moved to the neighbouring country Maki. You do not know what the solution to the situation is, but you want to end the violence.

You have been summoned to a 30 minute meeting. On this meeting you may encounter with representatives of:

- The fisherman
- The opposition party
- An international organisation
- Youth Action Association
- The Government of Maki
- The Government of Kontanu

Commonly, you need to find 3 solutions to the conflict happening in the lake.

Fishermen

Fisherman of Kontanu: You are worried about the conflict and its impacts on fishing. Your family has been living next to the lake for generations, but already a few of your family members moved to the neighbouring country Maki. You do not know what the solution to the situation is, but you want to end the violence.

You have been summoned to a 30 minute meeting. On this meeting you may encounter with representatives of:
- The fisherman
- The farmers
- The opposition party
- An international organisation
- Youth Action Association
- The Government of Maki
- The Government of Kontanu

Commonly, you need to find 3 solutions to the conflict happening in the lake.

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Jorge Aguado Sánchez (Co.Wonders) with the support of Sarian Jarosz.

Utopia for sustainable dreams

1. General information

- **Thematic:** activism, environmental peacebuilding, future-building and strategic action
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to develop an inspiring vision of success (utopia) on a social or environmental issue/conflict
  - to enhance the creative and critical thinking skills with an imagination-based exercise
  - to understand how to translate long-term visions into actionable steps
  - to reflect on your role as agents of change within environmental peacebuilding
  - to increase motivation (to dream!) and engagement in sustainable activism processes
- **Number of participants:** 10-30 participants
- **Time:** 90-120 min
- **Materials:**
  - paper (A4)
  - markers or colourful pens
  - post-its (optional)
  - tape (optional)

Link to SDG:
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Awareness of Existing Conflicts
- Peace with Nature
- Peace Advocacy
- Strategies for Peace
- Conflict Analysis
- Conflict Transformation

2. Short description

It's time to dream for the future. Yes, to dream! This workshop invites participants to explore activism through imagination and creativity. By designing a "utopian" future where their conflict is resolved, participants are guided to expand their thinking beyond limitations. With this guided workshop, people can translate this vision into concrete steps, creating a path from dreaming to action.

3. Preparation

- Prepare a calm environment that encourages creativity and openness, you can do a "creative energizer" that can help their internal creativity to showcase.
- Bring multiple materials for drawing, painting and writing.
- Prepare three flipcharts with the process, as sometimes it is difficult for people to imagine the steps they need to take.

4. Implementation

Step 1: Choosing the issue (5 min)

Start by telling the participants what is the aim and objective of this workshop: to design a utopian future to build creative paths of action that are sustainable. Further, let them know that this will be individual work and not shared unless they want to, so they don't need to worry about making it perfect.

Ask participants to think of the issue they have been working on, or one you would like to be working on for this exercise.

Tip: they can use the one they used for the Rapid response climate-security analysis

Step 2: Imagining the WIN (15 min)

Participants imagine the best-case-scenario where everything goes perfectly:
-Limitless funding
-Countless volunteers to help you
-Popular and political support
-Everything goes your way

Reflect on this question:
What does success look like?

Ask participants to take a piece of paper and write / draw this win-scenario.

Step 3: Expanding the utopia (10-15 min)

Tell participants now that everything they imagined happened (congratulations!). Tell them to enjoy the moment, relax and breathe in the sweet air of victory.

Then, tell people to go back to their imaginatory scenario and ask themselves: *"What would you do next after achieving this success?"*

After 3-5 minutes, announce that they need to repeat these last questions at least 5 times. Participants need to continue until they reach a place where no further wins are possible, and there is nothing more to do.

Step 4: Live this scenario - short dream journey (10 min)

Participants imagine living in this utopian world:
• When you step outside your house or flat, what do you see?
• What are people doing? How are they living?
• As you walk around, what do you hear, smell, and feel?

Ask participants to add what they saw to their description.

After they finished tell them this:

This is what winning looks like.
This is what you are fighting for.

This is what gets you out of bed every morning to face the hard work that being an environmental peacebuilder calls for.

And this is what is going to motivate others to join you.

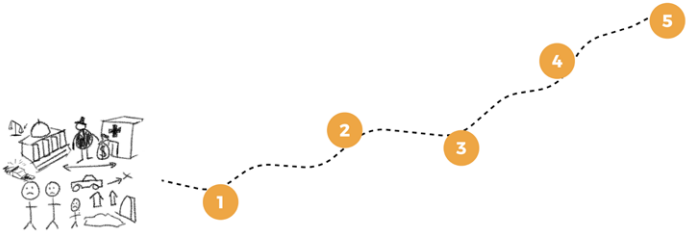
Remember this win.

Remember your Utopia

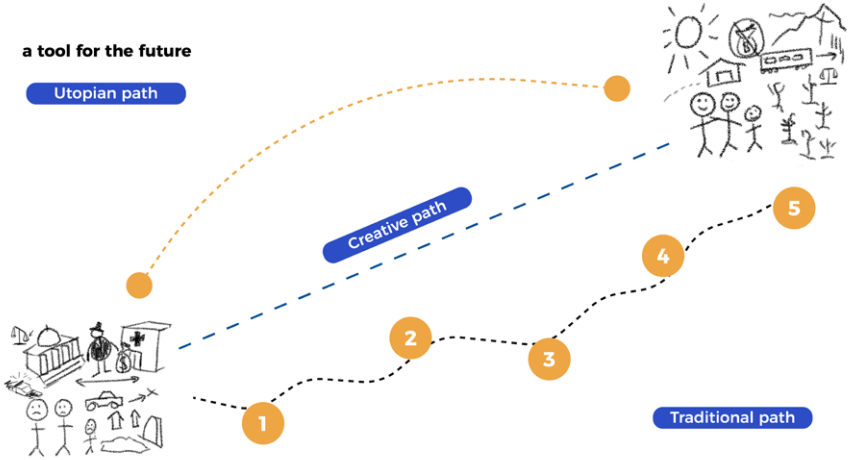
Step 5: From Utopia to Action (30-50 mins)

Ask participants to grab an A4 paper and think about the issue they want to work in regarding Environmental Peacebuilding.

Now participants need to draw:
- the current situation (at the bottom-left of the page)
- their utopia (at the top-right of the page)
- a pathway between both, identifying key steps needed to reach that vision.



Invite participants to draw different paths:
- the traditional path: It is the one that comes naturally, the bureaucratic steps, the talks with NGOs and politicians to gather support, the fundraising...
- the utopian path: it is the one where everything can happen, there are no limits, everything is possible!
- the creative path (middle): it is the mix between the traditional and the utopian path, the one where dreams are possible but we keep a foot on the Earth.
This is the path to take to change things!



source: "The Art of Activism"

Step 6: Debriefing (10-20 min)

• How was this process of dreaming and believing in your utopia?
• What motivated you most in your utopian vision?
• What surprised you during the exercise?
• Which steps feel realistic in the short term? and in the long term?
• How does this relate to Environmental Peacebuilding, how can we use it at the time of building our projects? And on their sustainability?
• What is one concrete action you can take after this workshop?

4. Advice & notes

• Some participants may have difficulties with imagination and drawing. Encourage them to do it at their own path, with no pressure (especially on step 3 and 6)
• Emphasize that there are no “wrong” visions.
You can adapt the complexity depending on the group (younger vs experienced participants).
• You can make it shorter or longer, as you think it will fit.
• This workshop works best in the last days of training or group work, as it is a perfect beginning of project building/designing.
• We really invite you to read the source book “The Art of Activism” and to bring creativity to peacebuilding spaces.

Note of the writer: If people ask why this workshop, it is simple: after many years working on environmental NGOs and Foundations, people and activists miss one thing on top of everything: dreaming. The lack of dreaming a better future, of collaborating in making it happen is what kills the motivation and the sustainability of the projects that aim to change the world. I invite you to never make your utopia fade. It’s what really moves you.

5. Further information & materials

Duncombe, Stephen, and Steve Lambert. The Art of Activism: Your All-Purpose Guide to Making the Impossible Possible. New York: OR Books, 2021.

6. Read more & sources

Source: adapted by Jorge Aguado Sánchez from *"The Art of Activism"* by Stephen Duncombe and Steve Lambert

Read more:

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• re.generation & Walmsley. T.(2023). "The Case for Utopia: Why Radical Imagining Is Some of the Most Important Work We Can Do." *Down to Earth*, downtoearth.substack.com/p/the-case-for-utopia.

Environmental peacebuilding: checklist

How to be in line with environmental peacebuilding in your activities? Check if your activity:

- ☐ helps participants understand how conflict, peace, and the natural world are interconnected.
- ☐ uses the open spaces, such as parks, forests, rivers, beaches or others as spaces to run the activities, connecting participants with the natural world.
- ☐ aims to support participants in looking beyond the visible conflict or situation, exploring the interconnections, historical context, power and gender dynamics,
- ☐ Is based on context analysis and considers how the activity may become part of the context in which it takes place.
- ☐ includes and welcomes diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and needs in a meaningful way, particularly those of communities from the Global South and indigenous peoples.
- ☐ considers and integrates local environmental challenges into the design, implementation, reflection and debriefing of the activity.
- ☐ reflects on how environmental problems affect people differently, depending on their background and life situation.
- ☐ promotes shared responsibility for natural resources, including the fauna and flora.
- ☐ showcases examples of good practices in the field, building the curiosity and positive impacts of the environmental peacebuilding programmes.

- ☐ considers the environmental impact of the activity itself, including waste, transport, materials, recycling, energy use, human or natural resources used, and the privilege or barriers involved in being able to attend.
- ☐ makes participants believe in a utopian future, from which a creative path can be designed between the traditional and the utopian solutions.

Conflict sensitivity:

concept

02

Understanding conflict sensitivity

Why is conflict sensitivity more than working in a conflict area?

Every setting we work in is a conflict-sensitive setting. In any situation, the way we talk and act affects the people and the environment around us. Often, these effects are small and do not have major consequences. At other times, however, our actions can unintentionally cause harm. This is especially likely in situations that we do not fully understand, such as when we are visiting or working in a place that is unfamiliar to us. It becomes even more important in contexts that have experienced, or are still experiencing, different forms of violence or conflict. In these situations, even actions that are meant to help people or bring about positive change can sometimes create unintended negative effects. Still, regardless of the forms or levels of violence and conflict, as said in the beginning, **every setting we work in is a conflict-sensitive setting**.

This can happen at the level of individuals, but also in the work of organisations such as:

- youth organizations;
- humanitarian agencies;
- development organisations;
- non-governmental organizations;
- educational institutions;
- governments;
- religious groups and similar.

Many of these actors aim to improve people's lives, provide assistance, or support communities in difficult circumstances. However, if the broader context of conflict is not taken into account, even well-intentioned activities may unintentionally reinforce tensions between groups, contribute to existing inequalities or cause harm.

This is where the concept of conflict sensitivity becomes important.

Conflict sensitivity refers to:

- **the ability to understand the context in which a conflict takes place;**
- **the skills to recognise how our actions or interventions may interact with that context.**
- **the competencies to act upon our intervention in order to minimise negative impact and maximise positive effects.**

In simple terms, conflict sensitivity means being aware that we can influence relationships between groups and trying to ensure that our actions do not make existing tensions worse. At the same time, conflict-sensitive approaches also seek to support more constructive relationships whenever possible.

Conflict sensitivity encourages individuals and organisations to reflect carefully on the possible impacts of their work. Questions such as:

- **Who benefits from this activity?**
- **Who might be unintentionally left out?**
- **How might different groups perceive this initiative?**

can help reveal risks that might otherwise remain unnoticed. By considering these questions early on, it becomes easier to design and implement activities in ways that reduce the risk of harm and support more inclusive outcomes.

In this context, the idea of "Do No Harm" has become an important reference point in many humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding initiatives. The approach highlights how well-intentioned interventions can sometimes reinforce existing divisions or inequalities if conflict dynamics are not taken into account. It encourages practitioners to examine how their actions may affect relationships between groups and to adjust their approaches in ways that minimise unintended negative impacts. While the Do No Harm approach is closely related to conflict sensitivity, the two concepts are not identical. Do No Harm primarily focuses on avoiding unintended negative consequences, ensuring that interventions do not worsen existing tensions. Conflict sensitivity builds on this principle but goes further. In addition to preventing harm,

conflict sensitivity encourages individuals and organisations to consider how their actions might support positive relationships, cooperation, and trust between groups.

In other words, conflict sensitivity is not only about avoiding negative impacts, but also about recognising opportunities to contribute to more constructive and peaceful interactions.

Different levels of conflict sensitivity

Conflict sensitivity can be understood and applied at different levels of society. While the core idea — **being aware of how our actions may affect conflict dynamics** — remains the same, the way this awareness translates into practice can look different depending on the context. Individuals, communities, organisations, and institutions all play a role in shaping relationships and social environments. Because of this, conflict sensitivity is not only relevant for large programmes or international interventions; **it is also relevant for everyday interactions and local initiatives**.

One helpful way to understand conflict sensitivity is by looking at two dimensions. The first dimension is the scale of interaction, meaning the level at which actions take place: **personal, community, or structural.** The second dimension is the **depth of engagement**, which describes how actively conflict sensitivity is applied.

- **AWARENESS -** At a basic level, people may simply become aware of conflict dynamics.
- **ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION -** With deeper engagement, they may analyse these dynamics more carefully and adapt their behaviour or initiatives accordingly.
- **ADAPTATION** - In some cases, actions may even contribute positively to building trust and cooperation between groups.

Looking at conflict sensitivity through these two dimensions can help illustrate how awareness and responsible action can grow from the individual level outward toward broader social structures.

The personal level

The personal level refers to the **attitudes, behaviours, and decisions of individuals**. Everyone interacts with others in their daily lives, whether in professional settings, educational environments, community activities, or informal social situations. These interactions may seem small, but they can influence how people feel about one another and how relationships develop between groups.

At the most basic level of engagement, conflict sensitivity at the personal level begins with

- **AWARENESS** - Individuals recognise that conflicts may exist in the environments in which they live or work, and that people may carry different experiences, perspectives, and sensitivities related to these conflicts. This awareness encourages individuals to pay attention to the language they use, the assumptions they make, and the ways they communicate with others.

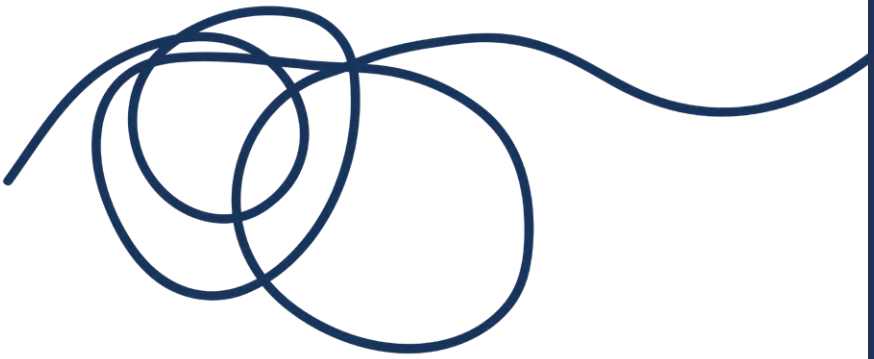
A deeper level of engagement involves

- **ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION** - Individuals begin to think more carefully about the social and historical context around them. They may reflect on questions such as: Why might certain topics be sensitive for some people? How might historical experiences influence how groups perceive each other? What role might stereotypes, inequalities, or power differences play in shaping interactions? This kind of reflection helps individuals better understand the complexity of social relationships.

At the deepest level of engagement, individuals move towards

- **ADAPTATION** - they change/adapt their behaviour based on this understanding. They may actively try to communicate in ways that are respectful and inclusive, encourage dialogue between different perspectives, and respond thoughtfully when tensions arise. They may also challenge harmful stereotypes or exclusionary behaviour when they encounter them. In this way, personal awareness and reflection can translate into everyday actions that contribute to more constructive interactions.

Although these individual actions may seem small, they can have an important influence on the broader social environment. **When individuals practise empathy, listen to others, and communicate respectfully, they help create spaces where trust and understanding can grow.**



The community level

The community level refers to **interactions between groups of people and the collective environments in which they live, work, or learn**. Communities may include neighbourhoods, workplaces, schools, organisations, youth clubs or networks of civil society groups. At this level, relationships between different groups become especially important.

- **AWARENESS** - At this level, community members and organisations recognise that different groups may have different experiences, interests, and perspectives. They acknowledge that tensions may exist between groups and that activities within the community may affect how these groups relate to one another.

- **ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION** - Here, communities begin to analyse the relationships and dynamics between groups more closely. This may involve identifying which groups interact frequently, where tensions may exist, and what factors contribute to misunderstandings or mistrust. Communities may also consider how access to resources, opportunities, or decision-making processes is distributed among different groups.

- **ADAPTATION** - At this level, communities can adapt their collective actions to strengthen inclusion and cooperation. Community initiatives may be designed to ensure that different groups are represented and able to participate. Dialogue activities may be organised to create opportunities for people to listen to each other's perspectives. Decisions about projects, partnerships, or shared resources may take into account how different groups might be affected.

Community-level conflict sensitivity can also help ensure that activities meant to benefit the community do not unintentionally reinforce existing divisions. By paying attention to inclusion and participation, communities can create initiatives that strengthen relationships rather than deepen tensions.
When communities actively apply conflict-sensitive approaches, **they often become spaces where people learn to cooperate across differences.** This can contribute to building stronger social cohesion and resilience in the face of future challenges.

The structural level

The structural level refers to the broader systems, institutions, and policies that shape how societies function. These structures may include government institutions, public policies, legal systems, educational systems, and the ways organisations design and implement programmes. Decisions made at this level can influence large numbers of people and have long-term effects on social relationships.

- **AWARENESS** - At the level of awareness, institutions and organisations recognise that their policies, programmes, and resource allocations can influence existing tensions or inequalities. For example, development programmes, humanitarian assistance, or large-scale social initiatives may unintentionally affect the balance between different groups if conflict dynamics are not considered.

- **ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION** - A deeper level of engagement involves analysing how policies or programmes interact with the broader conflict environment. Institutions may conduct conflict analyses to better understand which actors are involved, what grievances exist, and how interventions might influence relationships between groups. This type of analysis helps decision-makers anticipate potential risks and opportunities.

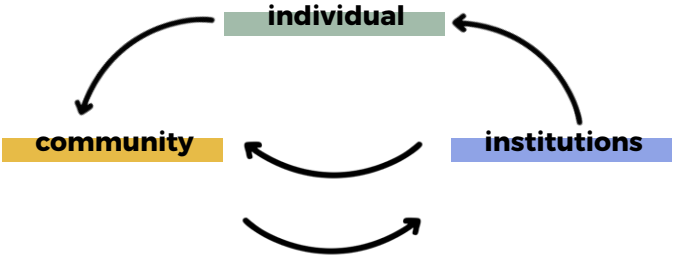
- **ADAPTATION** - At the deepest level of engagement, institutions adapt policies, strategies, and programmes to minimise harm and support more inclusive outcomes. This may involve designing initiatives that distribute benefits fairly, ensuring that different communities are consulted and represented in decision-making processes, or adjusting programmes when unintended negative effects are identified.

Structural-level conflict sensitivity is particularly important because policies and institutional decisions often shape the environment in which individuals and communities operate. When institutions adopt conflict-sensitive approaches, they can help create systems that encourage cooperation, fairness, and dialogue rather than reinforcing divisions.

Bringing the levels together

Although these three levels—personal, community, and structural—can be described separately, in reality they are closely connected. Changes at one level often influence the others. For example, individuals who practise respectful communication can contribute to more inclusive community interactions. Communities that encourage dialogue and cooperation can influence how organisations design programmes. At the same time, institutions that promote inclusive policies can create conditions that support positive interactions at both the community and personal levels.

Understanding conflict sensitivity across these different levels helps highlight that building more peaceful and cooperative societies is a shared responsibility. Individuals, communities, organisations, and institutions all have roles to play. By becoming aware of conflict dynamics, reflecting on how actions may influence relationships, and adapting behaviour and initiatives accordingly, actors at every level can contribute to reducing tensions and strengthening constructive social interaction. Recognising these interconnected levels also helps prepare the ground for more specific approaches, including conflict-sensitive practices within particular sectors such as education.



Different levels of conflict sensitivity

"I felt it shelter to speak to you."
Emily Dickinson

Whenever we need to address violence, prejudice, injustice, or inequality in our daily lives, and all the more so in the role of an educator, we obviously mean well. This is when it is especially important to be fully aware of how our actions respond to, interact with, and are interpreted in a diverse (and sometimes not obvious) range of fragile, conflict-affected contexts. Our starting point for creating a safe space, an educational activity as a shelter, is to understand that what we say or do can always have unintended consequences. By taking responsibility for this awareness and actively trying to prevent potential negative effects while reinforcing any positive outcomes, we take a step towards conflict sensitivity.

According to the INEE Guidance Note, conflict-sensitive education is the process of:

1. Understanding the context in which education takes place;
2. Analysing the two-way interaction between the context and education programmes and policies (development, planning, and delivery); and
3. Acting to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of education policies and programming on conflict, within an organisation's given priorities.

To be able to do all this, and to ideally "do the right thing" - or, at least, not to make things worse - we can rely on approaches that have been tried and tested by peacebuilders across the globe. One such approach is the 5-CPPB Sensitivities Framework (see Fig. 1), designed to help us develop awareness of conflict contexts in all their complexity.

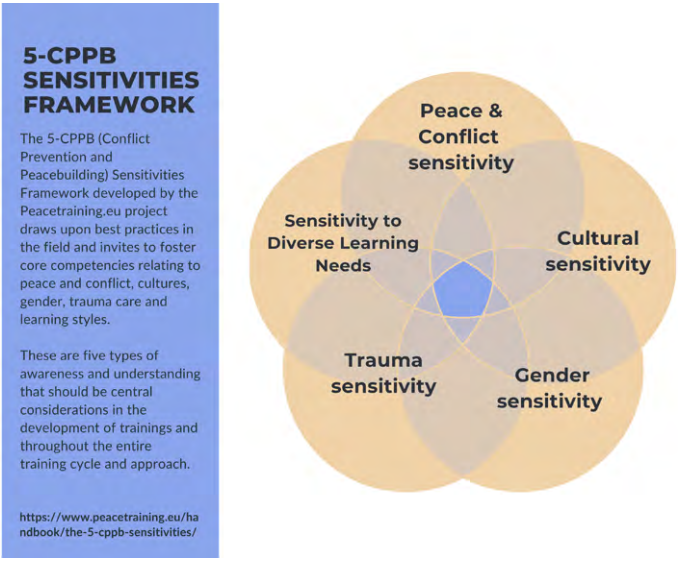


Fig. 1. The 5-CPPB Sensitivities Framework designed by Peacetraining.eu

Peace & Conflict sensitivity is about respecting and understanding the dynamics of a particular conflict enough to minimise any negative impacts of one's intervention and maximise the positive impacts of an intervention (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012). It also encourages participants to understand the values, traditions, cultures, and approaches related to conflict-handling, peacebuilding and related fields (such as dealing with diversity, handling trauma and grief). Furthermore, it offers space for participants to explore conflict dynamics, learn how to cooperate with different peacebuilding actors, analyse conflict and learn from good practices in peacebuilding.

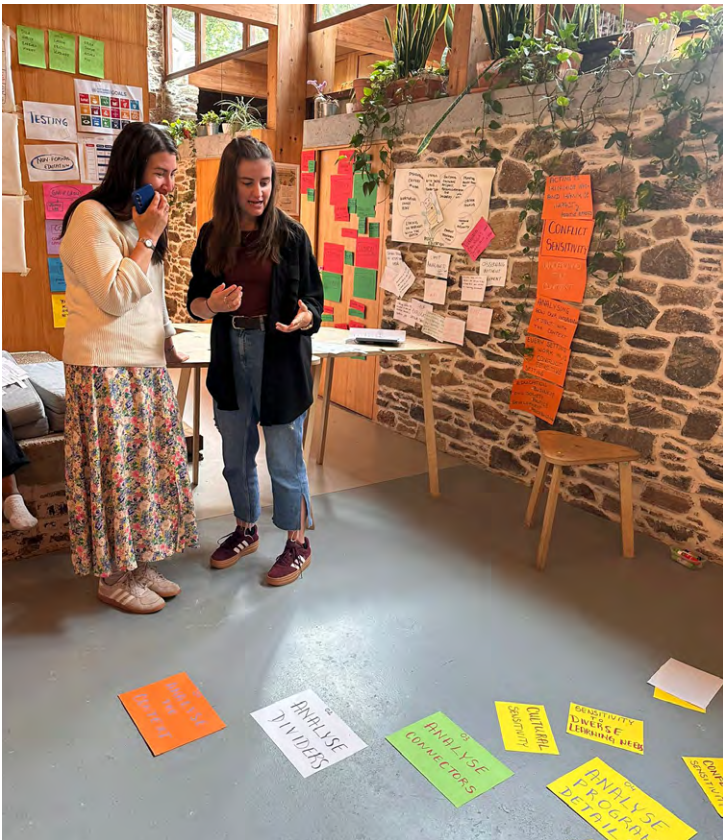
Cultural sensitivity helps us to recognise cultural differences, understand how they shape behaviour and perspectives, and overcome personal biases to be able to interact across cultures. In peace training, it means adapting approaches to local contexts, incorporating local knowledge and non-Western perspectives, and creating opportunities for inclusive participation that respects language, culture, and diversity. Cultural sensitivity points out the awareness of how cultural differences influence learning environments and the perception of conflict.

Gender sensitivity focuses on understanding the historical and ongoing inequalities between genders and being aware of the fact that different genders experience conflict differently. In training, it involves applying a gender lens throughout the programme for balanced participation and representation, highlighting diverse gender roles, and promoting gender equality in peacebuilding. Besides that, it focuses on promoting gender equality and intersections in peacebuilding and other fields.

Trauma sensitivity requires awareness of the psychological impact that conflict and peacebuilding experiences may have on both participants and trainers. It is vitally important to avoid re-traumatisation, address sensitive topics carefully, encourage self-care, find ways to respond to triggers, encourage self-care and provide space for participants to share concerns privately should the need arise.

Sensitivity to diverse learning needs acknowledges differences in personal preferences, abilities, learning styles, and experiences among participants. Trainers should adapt methodology and activities to accommodate these differences, ensuring access, inclusivity, and engagement for every learner. This sensitivity highlights the importance of accommodating diverse cognitive and physical abilities.

With the Framework in mind, let's take a look at an already mentioned methodology, that is also a mindset: Do No Harm. Educational activities in sensitive contexts are never neutral and may both reduce or increase the risk of conflict. In a way, "do no harm" is a bare minimum of being conflict sensitive.



Do No Harm and educational processes

Every word has consequences. Every silence, too.
~Jean-Paul Sartre

As mentioned previously, the Do No Harm approach urges making decisions with an awareness of how they could affect power dynamics and inter-group relations. Often, such details as (unintentionally) favouring one side of a conflict through discourse, the choice of a language, a project venue, a particular educational tool, or a discussion topic may contribute to conflict.

Do No Harm suggests having a toolbox for addressing such instances and analysing the situation from the perspective of conflict sensitivity. Historically coming from the Latin healthcare principle, Primum non nocere, the concept was later used to ensure that aid interventions in conflict zones did not make tensions worse between groups. In educational settings, the principle will require working with our biases as educators, representing multiple perspectives, recognising any historical, political, or cultural tensions, and, ultimately, avoiding materials, tools, or activities that may trigger hostility or reinforce divisions.

Now that we have an idea of Do No Harm and Conflict Sensitivity, what would be our process when planning, implementing, and evaluating an educational activity?

Sensitivity to diverse learning needs acknowledges differences in personal preferences, abilities, learning styles, and experiences among participants. Trainers should adapt methodology and activities to accommodate these differences, ensuring access, inclusivity, and engagement for every learner. This sensitivity highlights the importance of accommodating diverse cognitive and physical abilities.

With the Framework in mind, let's take a look at an already mentioned methodology, that is also a mindset: Do No Harm. Educational activities in sensitive contexts are never neutral and may both reduce or increase the risk of conflict. In a way, "do no harm" is a bare minimum of being conflict sensitive.

Source: Method guide *Do No Harm and Conflict Sensitivity in Educational Settings* by Andra Tănase.

Questions to ask at each step:

1. Analyse the context
What are the causes of the conflict?
Who are the main actors in the conflict, and what are their motivations?
Who are the participants? What is their background?
What interactions do they have? Were there past issues among them?
What are their needs? What are their values?

2. Analyse dividers
What divides them?
What are the spaces they can/cannot go together?
What are the activities they do not do together?
What triggers might contribute to an escalation of conflict?

3. Analyse connectors
What do they have in common? Are there any shared experiences or emotions?
What activities do they do together?
What moments kept them together?

4. Analyse program details
Think of how you normally plan your activity.
Think about it in terms of the 5 sensitivities you are aware of.
Is there anything that you could redesign?

5. Identify patterns of impact
Think about how your actions can impact the different sensitivities.
Think about the symbolism of your own presence and behaviour.
What/who do you represent? Do you implement a certain power structure?

6. What other options are there?
Test your activity with a fellow educator, implement with a constant eye for monitoring the impact on sensitivity.

7. Implement options
Think about the actions you can implement so that the effect on your learners shows sensitivity and brings more connection and peace to your context.

Conflict sensitivity, peace education and sustainable development

Conflict sensitivity, peace education, and sustainable development are closely connected and **should not be understood separately**. As mentioned earlier, every setting we work in is a conflict-sensitive setting because all programmes, activities, and interactions take place within social, political, economic, and cultural contexts that are shaped by relationships, inequalities, and sometimes tensions or violence. This means that our actions can influence these dynamics positively or negatively, even when peacebuilding is not the main objective.

As said before, conflict sensitivity refers to the ability to understand the context in which conflict takes place, recognise how our actions or interventions may interact with that context, and adapt our approaches in ways that minimise harm and strengthen positive effects. This is especially important in educational settings. Schools, workshops, trainings, and learning programmes are always embedded within communities that may experience tensions, inequalities, exclusion, or violence. Because of this, educational activities can unintentionally reproduce existing divisions if these dynamics are not carefully considered. Applying conflict sensitivity in education therefore means paying attention not only to what is taught, but also to how learning takes place, whose perspectives are included, and how participants interact with one another.

Peace education plays an important role in this process. It supports the development of skills, knowledge, imagination, compassion, and perseverance that help people reduce direct violence and build peaceful relationships, transform unjust structures, and challenge cultural beliefs that legitimise violence.

Through dialogue, reflection, and learning from different perspectives, participants can become more aware of how conflicts emerge and how their own behaviour influences others. In this way, peace education can strengthen conflict sensitivity as both a practical skill and a mindset.

At the same time, these ideas are strongly linked to sustainable development. Sustainable development requires the harmonisation of three interconnected dimensions: sustainable economic growth, social inclusion and equality, and environmental protection. Peaceful and inclusive societies are essential for achieving these goals.

Without conflict sensitivity, development initiatives may unintentionally deepen inequalities or tensions. Without education that promotes dialogue, inclusion, and critical reflection, long-term peace and sustainable development become difficult to achieve.

For this reason, conflict sensitivity, peace education, and sustainable development should be seen as **interconnected approaches that reinforce one another. Together, they encourage more inclusive, reflective, and responsible ways of working that can contribute to peaceful and sustainable societies.**

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Conflict sensitivity:

activities

02

Beyond good intentions

1. General information

- **Thematic:** understanding conflict sensitivity and its practical approaches
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to understand the concept of conflict sensitivity
  - to distinguish between conflict-sensitive and conflict-insensitive interventions
  - to reflect on the importance of integrating conflict sensitivity into all types of projects
  - to explore practical ways to ensure conflict-sensitive approaches in participants' own work
- **Number of participants:** 6-30 participants
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:**
  - printed statements (conflict-sensitive / insensitive features)
  - flipchart and markers
  - sticky notes
  - tape or pins

Link to SDG:
- SDG SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- SDG 4: Quality Education

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Conflict Sensitivity
- Conflict Analysis
- Context in Educational Programs

2. Short description

This session introduces participants to the concept of conflict sensitivity by engaging them in a hands-on activity where they will analyse and categorise features of peacebuilding, peace education, development or any other interventions. Through group discussion and reflection, participants will learn how to identify conflict-sensitive and conflict-insensitive approaches and understand why integrating conflict sensitivity is essential for responsible and sustainable planning and programming.

3. Preparation

- Print and cut out the list of statements
(mixed conflict-sensitive and insensitive features)
- Prepare a flipchart with two columns: Conflict sensitive / Conflict insensitive
- Familiarise yourself with the definition of conflict sensitivity (chapter "Understanding conflict sensitivity")
- Prepare a short explanation for the wrap-up

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction (10 min)

Introduce the concept by asking: What makes a project "good" in a conflict-affected or diverse context?
Briefly explain that even well-intended projects can unintentionally worsen tensions if they are not conflict-sensitive. Therefore, we will try to understand conflict sensitivity in order to use it in our projects, regardless of the topic, because every setting we work in is a conflict-sensitive setting.

Step 2: Group work: sorting activity (25 min)

Divide participants into small groups (3-5 people). Provide each group with the mixed list of all statements from the further information and materials. Give them the following task:

- Sort the statements into conflict-sensitive and conflict-insensitive
- Discuss why each statement belongs in that category
- Prepare a short presentation
- If you think something is missing, you can add a statement to both, conflict-sensitive and insensitive category
- While sorting the statements, give examples of your own work that can serve as a guiding point.

Step 3: Group presentation (20 min)

Bring everyone together and invite group by group to share their results.

After each presentation, check with the group:
- Were there disagreements?
- Which statements were most difficult to categorise? Why were they difficult?

After everyone presents, compare the results and identify any differences.

Step 4: Facilitator input: what is conflict sensitivity? (15 min)

Present the correct grouping (from further information and materials) and conclude with a definition (based on chapter "Understanding conflict sensitivity"):

Conflict sensitivity means understanding the context, analysing how interventions interact with that context, and acting to minimise harm and maximise positive impact on peace. Besides that, conflict sensitivity is something that needs to accompany any project, regardless of the level and dynamics of conflict and violence, and regardless of the field (education, business, civil society, politics, development, peacebuilding etc.)

Step 5: Debriefing (20 min)

- How did you feel during the activity?
- What was the most important insight for you?
- Why is it important to be conflict-sensitive in our work?
- What risks arise if we are not conflict-sensitive?
- How can we ensure conflict sensitivity in our projects?
- How does conflict sensitivity help ensure that progress in one SDG does not undermine others?

5. Advice & notes

• Use everyday life examples if participants have experience
• Emphasise that conflict sensitivity applies to all contexts, not only "conflict zones".
• If the group is bigger, it might require more time.
• Keep in mind that some discussions can be triggering for the participants, therefore, before group work, invite them to take care of themselves and mention that some discussions can bring memories of uncomfortable moments.

6. Further information & materials

Conflict-sensitive intervention:
• A "good" project doesn't make the situation worse and, ideally, helps the situation improve.
• It should be part of every project, regardless of working in areas affected by conflict or not.
• Tries to avoid doing harm and, if possible, to do some good and improve relations between people.
• Look at what connects and divides people in the community.
• Can open doors for future peacebuilding or dialogue work.
• Recognises that every context has tensions and power dynamics, even if they are not openly violent.
• Considers how different groups experience and access the process, beyond overall outcomes.

Conflict-insensitive intervention:
• Only thinks about conflict if it stops the project from happening.
• It is not important to look at how the project affects local tensions or relationships.
• Measures success by results in that sector (e.g., number of children in school, number of participants).
• Focuses mainly on project goals, like building schools or improving health services.
• Aims to provide services, development benefits or implement the project, not to change conflict dynamics.
• Assumes that conflict sensitivity is only relevant in "conflict zones" or post-war settings.
• Prioritises efficiency and quick results.
• Engages with communities without fully exploring underlying relationships and perspectives.
• Applies "copy-paste" mechanism from other realities.

6. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Nevena Radosavljević

Read more:

• Tănase, Andra. (2022). *Do No Harm and Conflict Sensitivity in Educational Setting*. ANPCDEFP - National Agency for the Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (Romanian National Agency for European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+).
• The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). (2013). *INEE guidance note on conflict sensitive education*. INEE.

Conflict sensitivity in project design

1. General information

- **Thematic:** conflict sensitivity in project cycle, different roles in project design
- **Learning objectives:**

  - to understand how conflict sensitivity applies across the full project cycle
  - to identify key considerations for conflict-sensitive planning, implementation, and evaluation
  - to explore the role of personal, community, and structural levels in project work
  - to strengthen participants' ability to design and adapt conflict-sensitive projects
- **Number of participants:** 10-30 participants
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:**
  - flipcharts and markers
  - sticky notes
  - printed guiding questions

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Conflict Analysis
- Conflict Sensitivity
- Strategies for Peace
- Planning the Educational Process
- Context in Educational Programs

2. Short description

This session explores how conflict sensitivity should be integrated throughout the entire project cycle, starting from planning to implementation and evaluation. Through group work and multi-level analysis (personal, community, structural), participants will identify risks, reflect on their roles, and develop practical strategies to design more conflict-sensitive peace education and sustainable development projects.

3. Preparation

- Prepare 3 flipcharts labelled:
• Planning
• Implementation
• Closing and evaluation
- Prepare guiding questions for each phase
- Familiarise yourself with examples and the approach based on the (Chapters "Understanding conflict sensitivity" and "Different levels of conflict sensitivity")

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction (10 min)

Introduce the main idea of this session, which is to explore that conflict sensitivity is not a one-time step. It must be integrated throughout the entire project, such as planning, implementation, and evaluation. Besides that, briefly introduce the three levels of conflict sensitivity as explained previously:

- **Personal** (attitudes, behaviours)
- **Community** (relationships between groups)
- **Structural** (systems, policies, distribution of resources)

Step 2: Group work (30 min)

Divide participants into 3 groups:

Group 1: Planning phase
Group 2: Implementation phase
Group 3: Closing and evaluation phase

After the division, invite each group to discuss

- **What do we need to know, consider, and reflect on to ensure conflict sensitivity at this stage?**

After the general discussion, ask them to think through all three levels:

Personal - How do our attitudes, assumptions, and behaviours matter?
Community - How might different groups be affected or included/excluded?
Structural - How do decisions, resources, or systems influence fairness and impact?

Besides that, ask groups to write ideas on the flipcharts and organise them under the three levels.

Step 3: Rotation and visiting the flipcharts (15 min)

After finalising the group work, groups rotate to the next flipchart. Invite them to add missing ideas, questions, or risks on the sticky notes.
Repeat the rotation 3 times until all groups have contributed to all phases.

Step 4: Plenary harvesting (20 min)

Go through each phase together and highlight key insights. Wrap up by adding examples from the United States Peace Institute, added in the further information and materials. Besides that, summarise that:

- Conflict sensitivity is continuous, not linear
- All levels are interconnected
- Small decisions (personal) can influence larger dynamics (community & structural)

Step 5: Debriefing (15 min)

- How did it feel to analyse the full project cycle?
- Which phase is most challenging to make conflict-sensitive? Why?
- What level (personal, community, structural) do you usually focus on and which do you overlook?
- What is one concrete change you would make in your next project?
- Why is it important to integrate conflict sensitivity throughout the entire project cycle?
- How can you relate what we did to your project planning in peace education or sustainable development?
- How does conflict-sensitive project design contribute to more inclusive and sustainable outcomes?

5. Advice & notes

- Encourage participants to use real project examples
- Support them in distinguishing between the three levels (this can be challenging)
- Emphasise that evaluation is often the weakest phase in terms of conflict sensitivity

Keep linking back to practical application

5. Further information & materials

• Encourage participants to use real project examples
• Support them in distinguishing between the three levels (this can be challenging)
• Emphasise that evaluation is often the weakest phase in terms of conflict sensitivity
• Keep linking back to practical application

Planning

• Understand the context, identify the need and scoope out the project

• Assess the positionality of yourself and your team in relation to the project and the context.

• Understand the interactions between the project and the context.

• Outline strategy for monitoring risk and harm.

Implementation

• Regularly assess whether the project is conflict sensitive.

• Monitor risks and address harm as it arises.

Close Out

• Evaluate the efficacy of the project and share lessons learned about conflict sensitivity.

Based on the United States Institute of Peace

6. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Nevena Radosavljević and based on the conflict sensitivity programme developed by the United States Institute of Peace

Read more:

• International Alert et al. (2004). "Applying conflict sensitivity at project and programme level", in Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, *Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding: A Resource Pack*, International Alert et al, London, Ch.3.
• Mashatt, M., Long, D., & Crum, J. (2008). *Conflict-sensitive approach to infrastructure development* (Special Report No. 197). United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr197.pdf

Education without harm

1. General information

- **Thematic:** conflict sensitivity in educational settings, different sensitivities in educational work
- **Learning objectives:**

  - to understand the concept and principles of conflict sensitivity in educational contexts
  - to reflect on participants' own educational practices through a conflict-sensitive lens
  - to become familiar with the 5-CPPB Sensitivities Framework in education
  - to identify ways to minimise harm and foster inclusive, peaceful learning environments
- **Number of participants:** 6-30 participants
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:**
  - tape or rope to create a large triangle on the floor
  - flipcharts and markers
  - A5 papers or sticky notes
  - visual of the adapted 5-CPPB Sensitivities Framework

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Conflict Sensitivity
- Conflict Analysis
- Context in Educational Programs

2. Short description

This session explores conflict sensitivity within an educational setting. Through experiential activities and reflection, participants will analyse how different methods, learning environments, and educator roles interact with social tensions and inequalities. Using the 5-CPPB Sensitivities Framework, they will identify ways to create more inclusive, reflective, and conflict-sensitive educational practices.

3. Preparation

- Prepare a large triangle on the floor adapted to education contexts, where the corners are based on each level of learning:
• Education based on knowledge and awareness (cognitive level)
• Shaping attitudes and relationships (social/emotional level)
• Encouraging action and transformation (behavioural/action level)
• Prepare a flipchart or any other visual of the 5-CPPB sensitivities framework for education (Chapter “Conflict-sensitive education”)
• Prepare guiding questions in advance

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction (10 min)

Introduce the idea that education is never neutral. It always interacts with the social context.
Explain that even well-intended educational activities (e.g. peace education or sustainability education) can unintentionally reinforce exclusion, bias, or tensions if they are not conflict-sensitive.
Introduce conflict sensitivity in education as an approach that ensures learning processes do not cause harm and, where possible, strengthen inclusion, dialogue, and mutual understanding.

Step 2: Educational positioning (15 min)

Present the adapted Cognitive CBT triangle (in further information and materials) and explain the three dimensions of educational work:
• Teaching knowledge and awareness
• Shaping attitudes and relationships
• Encouraging action and transformation

Ask participants to position themselves based on:

Where they currently focus in their educational work, or where they would like to focus. Invite a few participants to share examples (e.g. types of activities, methods, or topics they use).

Step 3: Group work - Conflict sensitivity in education (25 min)

Divide participants into small groups based on their position. Give them the task to reflect on:
• What do you do (or could you do) to ensure that your educational practice is conflict-sensitive?

Encourage them to think about:
• Who participates and who might be excluded
• How are topics presented?
• How are discussions facilitated?
• How are different perspectives handled?

Ask them to write each idea on a separate sticky note and focus on concrete practices.

Step 4: Group presentation (15 min)

Invite groups to present their ideas. While participants are presenting, take the sticky notes from them and organise their responses (sticky notes) on a board according to the 5-CPPB sensitivities framework, without presenting the framework yet.

Ask participants:
• What patterns do you see in these practices?
• What makes an educational activity conflict-sensitive?

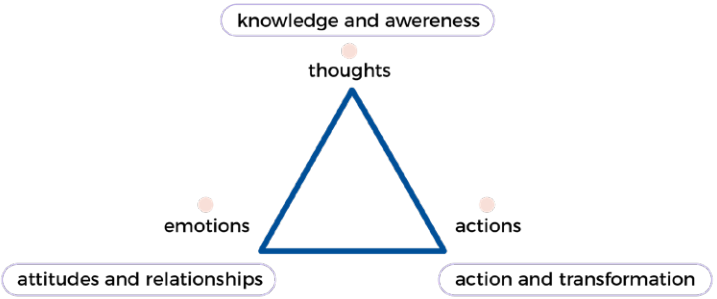
Step 5: Facilitator input - 5 Sensitivities in education (10 min)

Introduce the 5-CPPB sensitivities framework for education and connect it to their answers.

Step 6 - Debriefing (15 min)

• How did you feel during this activity?
• What was the most important insight for you?
• How can education unintentionally reinforce tensions or inequalities?
• Why is it important to apply conflict sensitivity in teaching and learning processes?
• How can you make your own educational practice more conflict-sensitive?
• Which SDGs could be negatively affected if education is not conflict-sensitive, and how? or/ Could there be peace education without conflict-sensitivity? Why?
• How does conflict-sensitive education contribute to more peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable societies?

6. Further information & materials



Adapted Cognitive CBT triangle
originally created by Dr. Aaron T. Beck.

7. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Nevena Radosavljević and based on the Cognitive CBT triangle originally created by Dr. Aaron T. Beck.

Read more:

• Brand-Jacobsen, K., Curran, D., Demarest, L., Annan, N., Wolter, S., Tanase, A., Tunney, E., & Shiroka, S. (2018). *The peace training handbook*. PeaceTraining.eu.
• Tănase, A. (2022). *Do no harm and conflict sensitivity in educational setting*. ANPCDEFP – National Agency for the Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (Romanian National Agency for European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+).

How conflict-sensitive is your practice?

1. General information

- **Thematic:** strengthening conflict sensitive approaches
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to assess the level of conflict sensitivity in participants' own work
  - to deepen understanding of the 5 sensitivities in educational practice
  - to identify concrete ways to strengthen conflict-sensitive approaches
  - to reflect critically on gaps between intention and practice
- **Number of participants:** 10-30 participants
- **Time:** 120 min
- **Materials:**
  - printed or visual circles of the 5 sensitivities
  - flipcharts and markers
  - sticky notes
  - tape to create a scale from 1 to 10 on the floor
  - cards with examples of practices

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Conflict Sensitivity
- Context in Educational Programs

2. Short description

This session invites participants to critically assess how conflict-sensitive their educational or peacebuilding practices are. Using a 1 to 10 positioning method and the 5 sensitivities framework, participants will reflect on their own work, identify gaps, and co-create practical strategies to strengthen
conflict sensitivity.

3. Preparation

- Prepare a visible scale from 1 to 10 on the floor (tape or paper)
- Prepare visual representations of the 5 sensitivities and an additional explanation of them (Chapter "Conflict-sensitive education")
- Prepare a few concrete examples of conflict-sensitive practices
- Ensure you can clearly explain each sensitivity with examples

4. Implementation

Step 1: Introduction (10 min)

Introduce the main idea of the session, which is to explore different aspects of conflict sensitivity. Namely, we often believe our work is conflict-sensitive, but the question is, how do we actually know? Explain that participants will assess their own practice, not to judge, but to improve. Briefly introduce the participants to the 5 sensitivities.

Step 2: Physical self-assessment (30 min)

Name and explain the sensitivity (e.g. peace and conflict sensitivity) and then ask participants:
- **"How present is this in your work? From 1 (not present at all) to 10 (fully integrated)"**
Participants are invited to physically position themselves on the scale. After positioning, ask participants to explain:
- **Why did you choose this position?**
Repeat the process for each sensitivity.

Step 3: Group work - "Upgrade to a 10" (30 min)

Divide participants into 5 groups. Assign each group one sensitivity and give them the task to define what a "10/10 practice" looks like. They should identify:

- **What concrete methods, acts or behaviours help reach a higher level of this conflict sensitivity?**

Explain that they will be asked to present.

Step 4: Marketplace sharing (30 min)

Invite groups to create a small "station" that will be visited by other participants. Invite the groups to mix in a way that each station has at least one representative from each group. Participants will rotate between stations after 5min, and the person whose station is visited should explain what was discussed concerning the "how to reach 10" strategies. Encourage participants to ask questions, take notes and compare with their own practices.

Step 5: Debriefing (15 min)

• How did it feel to position yourself on the scale?
• What did you notice about your own practice?
• Where do you see the biggest gaps?
• What is one concrete thing you can improve immediately?
• Why is it important to reflect critically on our own work? Especially in peace education and sustainable development education?
• How does improving conflict sensitivity strengthen the impact of your work on building inclusive and peaceful societies?

5. Advice & notes

• Make it clear: this is not about judging, but learning
• Encourage honesty in order to avoid "socially desirable" answers
• Pay attention to participants who stay in the middle
• Adapt movement activity if space is limited or not suitable for the group (can be done with cards or showing fingers)
• This activity is described to last 120 min. Still, it can be shortened to 90 min by having less time for each part of activity, especially "Physical self-assessment" in case that the activity "Education without harm" is implemented prior to this one.
• This activity can be implemented even with the smaller group. In that case, consider adjusting the sharing method (e.g plenary sharing, or divide them into two groups, and then rotate them between stations).

6. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Nevena Radosavljević and based on the 5-CPPB Sensitivities Framework designed by Peacetraining.eu.

Read more:

• Brand-Jacobsen, K., Curran, D., Demarest, L., Annan, N., Wolter, S., Tanase, A., Tunney, E., & Shiroka, S. (2018). *The peace training handbook*. PeaceTraining.eu.

• Tănase, A. (2022). *Do no harm and conflict sensitivity in educational setting*. ANPCDEFP – National Agency for the Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (Romanian National Agency for European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+).

What matters the most?

1. General information

- **Thematic:** Do No Harm approach in education
- **Learning objectives:**
  - to understand the key components of the Do No Harm approach in education
  - to prioritise elements of conflict-sensitive educational practice
  - to reflect critically on what matters most in preventing harm
  - to explore trade-offs and decision-making in real educational settings
- **Number of participants:** 5-30 participants
- **Time:** 90 min
- **Materials:**
  - printed cards with diamond ranking statements
  - flipcharts and markers
  - tape (optional, to build diamonds on the wall/floor)

Link to SDG:
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Link to YPAN competence Framework:
- Conflict Analysis
- Conflict Sensitivity

2. Short description

This session introduces the Do No Harm principle in education through a diamond ranking exercise. Participants analyse and prioritise key elements of conflict-sensitive practice, exploring how educational activities can unintentionally reinforce tensions or strengthen connections. The session encourages critical reflection, discussion, and practical application.

3. Preparation

- Print and cut the 9 diamond ranking statements (one set per group) - in further information and materials
- Prepare an example of a diamond ranking (1-2-3-4-5 structure) - in further information and materials
- Familiarise yourself with Do No Harm principles (Chapter "Do No Harm and educational processes")

4. Implementation*

Step 1: Introduction (5 min)

Introduce the main aim of this activity, which is to explore the Do no harm approach in educational practices. Explain to participants that even well-intentioned education can unintentionally cause harm. The Do No Harm approach helps us reflect on how to avoid this.

Step 2: Group work: diamond ranking (30 min)

Divide participants into small groups (3-5 people). Tell them that we will be using the diamond ranking for this activity and explain how the ranking works. Their task as a group is to discuss and arrange the 9 statements into a diamond shape. They are invited to discuss and agree on what is most important for "Do No Harm" and what is less central (not unimportant, but less critical) for "Do No Harm". During the process, they are welcome to bring examples of what this statement could mean based on their experience. Once they agree, they should glue the diamond together in the shape.

Step 3: Gallery walk (10 min)

After finalising the group work, ask them to place their diamonds on the floor or on the wall so others can see it. Groups are invited to walk around and look at other diamonds.

Step 4: Reflection and debriefing (25min)

- Which elements were hardest to place at the beginning?
- Were there disagreements? Why?
- What differences did you notice in comparison to other groups?
- Is there really a “most important” element, or are they interconnected?
- Which element do you currently overlook in your practice?
- What is one thing you would change in your next activity?
- Can education still contribute to peace and sustainable development if it unintentionally reinforces divisions or inequalities? Why or why not?
- What risks do we take in relation to peace and sustainable development if we do not apply a Do No Harm approach in our work?
- What is one concrete way you can apply Do No Harm in your work to support more inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable learning environments?

Step 5: Facilitator input and closing (20min)

Close with explaining that there were no right or wrong answers, because Do No Harm is not linear, it's a system of interconnected decisions. Therefore, if we ignore one element (e.g. dividers or power dynamics), it can undermine the rest. Do No Harm, regardless in which field, requires continuous reflection and adaptation. Share with participants the 7 steps of Do No Harm in education from chapter "Do No Harm and educational processes"as a reminder and guide for future activities.

5. Advice & notes

• Emphasise that there are no "wrong" answers, only reasoning
• Encourage disagreement, in this case, it deepens learning
• Avoid jumping in too early, let groups struggle productively
• Use real examples if participants have experience
• Highlight that "least important" ≠ unimportant
• Before starting, note that it can also be triggering or hard to discuss these topics, so invite participants to take care of themselves and take break if needed.

6. Further information & materials

Diamond ranking:

```
    1 (most important)
  2     2
3   3   3
  4     4
    5 (least important)
```

Statements for diamond ranking:

• Understanding the context and participants is essential for designing conflict-sensitive educational activities.
• Identifying what divides participants helps prevent activities from reinforcing tensions.
• Recognising shared experiences and connections can strengthen relationships and trust.
• Carefully designing educational activities (methods, structure, facilitation) is key to avoiding harm.
• Reflecting on how our actions, roles, and presence influence power dynamics and perceptions is crucial.
• Continuously testing, adapting, and monitoring activities improves conflict sensitivity.
• Actively creating opportunities for dialogue, connection, and nonviolence should guide educational practice.
• Anticipating how an activity might be perceived by different groups helps prevent unintended negative impacts.
• Exploring alternative approaches and adjusting plans increases the chances of responding sensitively to complex situations.

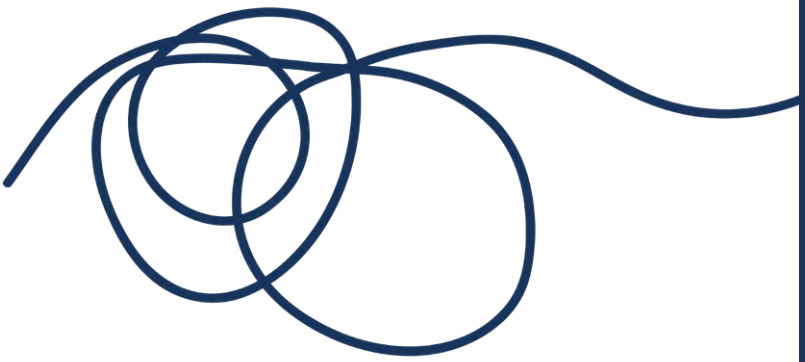
6. Read more & sources

Source: developed by Nevena Radosavljević and inspired by the "Do No Harm and Conflict Sensitivity in Educational Settings" by Tănase Andra.

The session is adapted based on the activity "Do No Harm" Principle in the Youth Worker's Activity from the "Guide on the educational course of trauma-informed youth work".

Read more:

• Tănase, A. (2022). *Do no harm and conflict sensitivity in educational setting*. ANPCDEFP – National Agency for the Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (Romanian National Agency for European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+).



Conflict sensitivity: checklist

Guideline for conflict-sensitive approaches in ESD and promoting peace as a lifestyle (and maybe education)

...it is a serious thing
just to be alive
on this fresh morning
in the broken world.

~Mary Oliver

Education for Sustainable Development links global sustainability issues with local realities. Understanding local realities, in turn, is streamlined by embracing peace as a lifestyle, a way of living and interacting. For peacebuilding or peace education, conflict sensitivity is a constant accompaniment. Therefore, during the projects, encourage yourself as a trainer, your peers, and participants to include non-violent communication, empathy, mindful decision-making, and environmental responsibility in life as daily practices. Within this paradigm, the criteria for conflict-sensitive educational activities make perfect sense :)

To summarise, here is your quick checklist:

Conflict-sensitive activities:

- ☐ Are implemented with the awareness that it becomes part of the context it is held in;
- ☐ Align with the Do No Harm principles;
- ☐ Consider the 5 sensitivities (peace and conflict sensitivity, cultural sensitivity; gender sensitivity; trauma sensitivity and sensitivity to diverse learning needs);
- ☐ Are built around promotion, protection, and fulfilment of human rights;
- ☐ Require context analysis and planning to minimise risk and prevent worsening the conflict dynamics;
- ☐ Maximise opportunities to build and sustain peace and further sustainable development;
- ☐ Ensure inclusion and full participation of vulnerable and marginalised groups;
- ☐ Do not seek to avoid all conflict at any cost, but rather to minimise the risk of harm.

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