

BUILDING TRUST IN THE FACE OF HATE

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR ADVANCING PEACE EDUCATION

Summary document based on the report "Building Trust in the Face of Hate: International framework for Peace Education and its application in the Basque Country"

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DEL PAÍS VASCO
PARA LA UNESCO
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ELKARTEA



HEZKUNTZA SAIA
DEPARTAMENTO DE EDUCACIÓN



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General Coordination: Eva Quiroga Vázquez (UN Etxea)

Translation: Bakun S.L.

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

(UNESCO Constitution)

WHY TALK ABOUT BUILDING TRUST IN THE FACE OF HATE TODAY?

We live in a global context marked by growing social polarisation, disinformation, hate speech and the erosion of spaces for dialogue. These trends have a particularly profound impact on children and young people, who spend an ever-increasing share of their social lives in digital environments where information spreads rapidly and discriminatory messages can easily be amplified.

Against this backdrop, the contributors to this report unanimously identify education as a vital tool for preventing violence, strengthening social cohesion and

fostering more inclusive societies. Peace education is no longer understood solely as a response to armed conflict. Instead, it is increasingly recognised as a strategy for social transformation aimed at addressing the structural causes of hate, discrimination and exclusion.

The UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development, adopted in 2023 by all 194 Member States, is founded on this very premise: peace is not simply the absence of war, but the active cultivation of relationships grounded in human dignity, equality, justice and mutual respect.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PEACE EDUCATION?



Peace education is not limited to preventing violence, nor is it defined simply by the absence of conflict. It promotes a way of living together based on human dignity, mutual respect, human rights and social justice. Its aim is to develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to live together in diverse societies, exercise democratic citizenship, resolve conflicts peacefully, challenge discrimination and hate speech, and actively contribute to building more inclusive, cohesive and peaceful societies.

YEAR	MILESTONE
1974	UNESCO's First Recommendation Concerning Education for Peace
1995	<u>Declaration on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy</u>
1996	<u>Delors Report or Learning: The Treasure Within</u>
2000	<u>Manifesto 2000: For a Culture of Peace</u>
2023	<u>Revision of the 1974 Recommendation Concerning Education for Peace</u>
2025	<u>International Year of Peace and Trust</u>



Figure 1. Key milestones in the international framework for peace education

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

EDUCATION IS A PREVENTIVE POLICY AGAINST HATE



One of the report's central messages is that hate speech cannot be addressed through regulation or content moderation alone. Its underlying causes – prejudice, stereotypes, inequality, discrimination and a lack of meaningful contact with diversity – must also be addressed. Education is the most effective means of tackling these factors from an early age.

DIGITAL AND MEDIA LITERACY IS ESSENTIAL



The spread of disinformation and hate speech online makes it essential to equip students with critical thinking skills, the ability to evaluate sources, digital citizenship and the ethical use of technology. The report emphasises that these competences are now indispensable elements of peace education in the twenty-first century.

HUMAN RIGHTS MUST BE AT THE HEART OF EDUCATION



The education systems that achieve the strongest outcomes in promoting social cohesion are those that place human rights, inclusion, gender equality and children's participation at the heart of their education policies. The OHCHR report on inclusive education and tolerance from early childhood highlights that these approaches strengthen children's resilience to violence and discrimination.

CULTURE AND THE ARTS FOSTER SOCIAL COHESION



The initiatives highlighted in the report demonstrate that arts and cultural education foster empathy, intercultural dialogue, creativity and an appreciation of diversity. The arts are presented as a powerful means of exploring memory, identity, coexistence and the collective construction of shared meaning.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IS A CORE COMPETENCY



UNESCO identifies social and emotional learning as one of the most important tools for building lasting peace. Developing empathy, understanding emotions, managing conflicts, making ethical decisions and building positive relationships are all fundamental competencies for preventing hate and exclusion.

A WHOLE-COMMUNITY APPROACH CREATES GREATER IMPACT



International and Basque experiences consistently show that peacebuilding is more effective when schools, families, public institutions and civil society organizations work together, creating coherent environments that reinforce the values of coexistence, inclusion and human rights.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

THE BASQUE COUNTRY: ALIGNED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The report explicitly highlights the Basque experience as an example of how international recommendations can be translated into local public policy.

A range of programmes developed in the Basque Country have placed memory, coexistence and human rights at the heart of educational practice. Initiatives such as *Adi-adian*, *Herenegun*, *Uztartu* and *Etikasi* have helped create spaces for reflection on violence, human suffering, reconciliation and mutual recognition.

Likewise, Decree 77/2023 incorporates competencies relating to:

- > democratic coexistence;
- > respect for diversity;
- > gender equality;
- > critical thinking;
- > digital citizenship;
- > the peaceful resolution of conflicts;
- > sustainability and global citizenship.



This alignment between international frameworks and the Basque curriculum provides **an opportunity** to further advance a transformative approach to education centred on building peace.

FIVE KEYS TO BUILDING TRUST IN THE FACE OF HATE



1. EDUCATE FOR AN UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSITY

Cultural, linguistic, religious and identity-based differences should be approached as a collective strength rather than a threat. Exposure to diverse perspectives fosters empathy and helps break down prejudice.

2. STRENGTHEN CRITICAL THINKING

Equipping students to analyse narratives, recognise manipulation and evaluate sources critically is essential to reducing the influence of disinformation and hate-driven narratives.

3. BUILD DEMOCRATIC MEMORY

Learning about experiences of violence, human rights violations and processes of reconciliation helps prevent the mistakes of the past from being repeated and strengthens a culture of peaceful coexistence.

4. PROMOTE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Peace cannot be learned through theory alone. It requires meaningful opportunities for dialogue, cooperation and democratic participation, both inside and outside the classroom.

5. ENGAGE THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Building peace cannot rest solely with teachers. Families, institutions, civil society organisations, public authorities and the wider educational community all have a role to play.



Figure 2. What nurtures trust?

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The report identifies a number of practical recommendations to guide educational action:



FOR SCHOOLS:

- > Embed peace education across all areas of learning.
- > Develop strategies to prevent hate speech and cyberbullying.
- > Promote participatory and collaborative teaching approaches.
- > Create safe spaces for dialogue on complex and controversial issues.
- > Integrate historical memory and human rights into teaching and learning.



FOR TEACHERS:

- > Strengthen training in social and emotional learning.
- > Develop digital citizenship competencies.
- > Use teaching approaches based on dialogue and active listening.
- > Incorporate artistic and cultural resources to explore coexistence and diversity.



FOR PUBLIC DECISION-MAKERS:

- > Promote comprehensive, long-term education policies.
- > Strengthen partnerships between education, culture and civil society.
- > Ensure adequate resources for programmes on coexistence, memory and diversity.
- > Evaluate the impact of the initiatives implemented.
- > Strengthen both initial teacher education and continuous professional development in peace education, human rights and digital citizenship.



Peace education is not a separate subject, but a cross-cutting approach that should permeate the curriculum, school culture, educational relationships and community participation.



IN CONCLUSION...

The report reaches a clear conclusion: trust does not emerge spontaneously. It is built through education, public policy, shared values and everyday experiences of coexistence that enable us to recognise the dignity of every person. In the face of the growing spread of hate speech, polarisation and disinformation, education is one of the most effective and sustainable tools for strengthening democratic, inclusive and resilient societies.

Building peace is not a secondary function of the education system but one of its core responsibilities. Educating for peace means preparing current and future generations to embrace diversity, think critically,

participate in democratic life, resolve conflicts through dialogue and uphold human rights and the common good.

Ultimately, **reacting to hate is not enough**. We must actively create the conditions that make peaceful coexistence possible: human rights education, critical thinking, social and emotional learning, democratic participation, a culture of peace and recognition of diversity. Trust is learnt, practised and built collectively. As the report itself reminds us, peace is not a state that, once achieved, endures forever, but an ongoing process that requires commitment, shared responsibility and a willingness to work together.





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