

Peace and Human Rights Education: Pakistan Experience

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Globally we are living in difficult times when peace and human security are facing new challenges that could have very negative implications if we do not address them positively.

Education is considered a key dimension and a very effective strategy to address these challenges and build the long-term process of peace, tolerance, justice and intercultural and international understanding. However, the fact that there are increased tensions and growing insecurity in the world today requires us to acknowledge that education, as practiced in schools, families and communities, often does not contribute as it should to the acquisition of life skills and promotion of mutual understanding and civic responsibility. In these circumstances, the need to re-orient education so that it can help create a better world is truly urgent.

Consequently there has to be a definitive focus on content and curriculum, values teaching and learning, and supportive learning environments with a holistic quality education approach to make education more conducive to the development of world citizens, proud of their identities, and able to contribute to a sustainable and peaceful future for the world.

Grammar School Rawalpindi (GSR) is a private school system founded in September 1985. The basic mission of the school is to provide holistic quality education inclusive of a special human rights education/values education component woven through the school curriculum and school activities, and in the ethos of the school. Its vision is to enable young people to become educated, humane and re-

sponsible citizens of Pakistan and the world. The GSR system comprises of 5 branches, a student body of over 1,250 students and 160 faculty members.

Peace and Human Rights Education Program

GSR developed a Human Rights and Values Education Program in 1995. It aims to sensitize young people towards creating a humane culture of peace and responsible citizenship, a vital national and universal need of today.

Realizing the need to address in a bigger way the present day culture of violence and exclusion in the country, GSR started networking with a spectrum of educational institutions for a wider dissemination of human rights and values education. It is currently networking with 6 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and 25 schools in Pakistan, and 5 international organizations.

The program has the following aims and objectives:

- To facilitate international understanding cooperation and world peace through education for human rights, peace, democracy, social development, and sustainable environment.
- To bring about full development of the human personality.
- To promote tolerance, culture of peace and a desire for justice and truth.

- To be global in perspective yet begin at the local, individual level.
- To be future-oriented yet start at the individual human values.
- To participate in social development, interact with the local environment and strive to improve it.
- To be concerned about problems around but celebrate what is unique and worthwhile.
- To be focused on four pillars of learning for the 21st century identified in the Delors Report, i.e., learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live to together.

The Human Rights and Values Education Program was later on renamed Peace and Human Rights Education Program.

Center for Peace and Human Rights Education

GSR established the Center for Peace and Human Rights Education (CPHRE) in December 2001 to provide a platform for the promotion of peace and human rights education through capacity-building and information-sharing. The hope is that these activities will create a critical mass of catalysts for change.

CPHRE has the following objectives:

- To promote respect for the life and dignity of every human being without discrimination or prejudice.
- To promote sharing of time and material resources in the spirit of generosity in order to put an end to exclusion, injustice and economic oppression.
- To promote responsible consumer behavior and develop practices that respect all forms of life and preserve the balance of nature on the planet.
- To contribute to community development with the full participation of women and respect for democratic principles.
- To create awareness about social issues and reflect upon appropriate solutions.

- To develop and promote human rights education programs.
- To provide a platform for civic education.
- To provide teacher training by networking with identified institutions and schools from the public, private, rural and urban sectors.
- To maintain a database on the human rights education activities it has initiated.
- To liaise with the government at the Federal and provincial levels.
- To mobilize support from United Nations agencies, donors and multinational companies.

The outreach programs for the underprivileged of GSR are implemented under the umbrella of CPHRE.

Overview of major human rights education-related activities:

- In May 1999 the first Human Rights and Values Education Workshop was organized with the Government of Pakistan in partnership with the Ministry of Education (Curriculum Wing) and with the support of UNESCO.
- A literacy primer called “Parh Kay Barh” (Learn to Advance Forward) was developed in August 1999 with an action plan on literacy through students entitled ‘Each One Teach One.’
- A flagship event was organized to launch the International Year of Peace in collaboration with schools from private, public and community sectors. Thousands of signatures were collected to express solidarity for peace.
- A Student Activity Festival was held in which forty schools participated in a two-day event. The theme was “How to Become Humane and Responsible Citizens of Pakistan and the World.”
- Since December 2000, the International Human Rights Day (IHRD) has been celebrated in partnership with schools to raise awareness, solidarity and action for human rights. In December 2002 after

presentations by different schools a walk was organized to the National Assembly headed by the Minister for Education (Ms. Zubaida Jalal), Director of UNESCO Pakistan (Ms. Inge Borge Brienes), and the Director of ILO Pakistan Office (Mr. Hans Lokollo). Students presented the Speaker of the National Assembly and Minister for Social Welfare with recommendations on child rights. This encouraged the Speaker of the National Assembly to personally attend the IHRD event in December, 2003.

- The Ministry of Education (Curriculum Wing) in November 2000 organized a human rights education workshop for master trainers from all provinces of Pakistan with this author as resource person. GSR is working closely with the Ministry of Education on human rights education and peace education curriculum development and teacher training.
- Publications for peace and human rights education:
 - *Decade Celebrations on Peace* (1996) – focuses on the following topics: Environmental issues, promoting tolerance and understanding, gender issues, child rights and a culture of peace.
 - *Lesson Modules for a Culture of Peace* (1999) – based on concepts of sustainable environment, tolerance, gender issues, cultural heritage, appreciation of diversity, awareness of AIDS and drugs, balanced diet, and participatory methodology.
 - *Literacy Primer “Parh Kay Barb”* (Learn to Advance Forward) (1999) – a primer with a complete teachers’ guide.
 - *Join Hands for Peace: 2000 International Year* – presents how to integrate values education in the school curriculum, and key concepts of values education.
 - *Lesson Plans for Peace and Democracy* – modules for classroom teaching. See annexes for sample lesson plans.

Teacher Training

The objectives of workshops on human rights, peace and democracy organized and/or facilitated by GSR are:

1. To create an awareness, sensitization and advocacy of action for peace, human rights, democracy, good citizenship, conflict resolution and sustainable environment.
2. To identify strategies and methodologies of holistic education for peace and human rights.
3. To develop skills of communication, analytical higher thinking, problem solution, team work and activism.
4. To help in changing mindsets and attitudes to encourage positive, responsible peaceful behavior.
5. To bring about international understanding, cooperation; promote tolerance; develop a desire for justice and truth.
6. To enable to bring about the full development of the human personality.
7. To focus on the four pillars of learning for the twenty-first century – *Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Be and Learning to Live Together*.
8. To learn that in order to transform others, one has to transform one’s self first.

At the local level, workshops are held as part of its in-service teacher training, and for Better Tomorrow Schools (schools run by NGOs for under-privileged children), for Divisional public school teachers, and for administrators of Fauji Foundation Schools, ASPnet schools, and schools run by NGOs.

At the national level, workshops are held in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (Curriculum Wing). In May 1999 workshops were organized for principals and teachers of 30 government schools. In December 2000 and in January 2001 workshops were held for master trainers to initiate pilot projects in all provinces of Pakistan.

Workshops are also held in collaboration with the Fazaldad Human Rights Institute for master trainers from all provinces of Pakistan annually since August 2000. GSR has also held workshops in Army Public Schools in the northern areas of Pakistan (Kharian, Multan, Quetta and Peshawar).

A teacher training workshop was organized on ‘Responsible Citizenship’ in October 2000 in partnership with UNESCO for 22 schools. The local participants were from ASPnet schools and schools of Peshawar, Haripur, Chakwal, and periurban areas and for master trainers of Developments in Literacy (DIL), an NGO working for education at the grassroots level in Khairpur, Sind and Dir district, North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

The workshop covered the following topics:

- Integrating values in the curriculum
- Making low cost resource material
- Methodologies of conducting human rights and peace education.

GSR participated in a workshop held in Islamabad in September 2000 organized by CIVITAS, an international civic education exchange program. The civic education workshop included:

- Lessons on responsibility from CIVITAS’s “Foundations of Democracy” series
- Lessons on authority from CIVITAS’s “Foundations of Democracy” series
- Introduction and overview of “We the people... Project Citizen”

GSR was the only educational institution that conducted a workshop as a follow up of the CIVITAS workshop for twenty schools for further dissemination.

Outreach Program for the Underprivileged

GSR implements an outreach program directed at underprivileged sections of society. The program covers the following activities:

a. Literacy center for street children

Two literacy centers are being run for street children since September 2001. Every year approximately 80 students graduate after attending an 8-month literacy program.

b. Vocational training center

In September 2001 a vocational training center was established for young women in the garment industry. To date, three batches of twenty girls have received diplomas in garment making.

c. Aware-raising interactive seminar on ‘Violence Against Women’

On 8 March 2004, a seminar on “Violence Against Women” on the occasion of the International Women’s Day celebration was held with participation of women from local communities. It was organized in collaboration with an NGO (Rozaan).

A one-day workshop was held for teachers on ‘Violence Against Women’ at the Islamabad Model Colleges for Girls in collaboration with Ministry of Justice and Human Rights.

Student Activities

CPHRE/GSR is networking with schools in the public, private and community sectors. Some schools for underprivileged children being networked are the following:

1. Cantonment Board School, Lalazar Rawalpindi
2. Better Tomorrow School, Chaklala Scheme III, Rawalpindi
3. Better Tomorrow School, Dhoke Chaudharian, Rawalpindi
4. Kandeel Institute – school for the visually impaired
5. SOS Village School, Rawalpindi
6. Apna Model School, Chakala, Rawalpindi
7. Literacy Centre for Street Children.

Students from Better Tomorrow and Apna Model School and Literacy School for street

children are invited to participate on National Day and International Day celebrations.

A student festival on the theme “Let’s Become Humane and Responsible Citizens of Pakistan and the World” was held at a local park in Rawalpindi in April 2000. 45 public and private schools (including those for the underprivileged sector, and ASPnet schools) with a total of 1,150 students, took part in the activity. The program consisted of

- Literary competitions in English and Urdu, including essay and poetry writing
- Art competitions
- Drama competitions
- Poster painting on UNESCO’s Manifesto of a Culture of Peace
- Puppet show on human rights education.

The distribution of prizes was enriched by dramatic presentations before a big audience on human rights education/values education by students.

GSR Volunteer Corps encouraged and organized the cleaning of the park and helped students form queues and share stationary material among themselves.

International Recognition

The CPHRE/GSR Peace and Human Rights Education Program has gained national and international recognition for its effective program.

The school, represented by this author as GSR Director, has represented Pakistan in many international human rights education forums. Some of these are the following: South Asian Subregional Workshop on Human Rights Education (New Delhi, 1998), Regional Workshop on Human Rights Education (Osaka, 1998), Workshop on Curriculum Development for Peace Education (Colombo, 2000), Orientation for Educators (Cairo, 2002); Seminar on Addressing Human Security (Istanbul, 2004), Conference on Education for Intercultural and Interfaith Under-

standing (Adelaide, 2004). The author held a workshop on successful practices of GSR/CPHRE and Human Rights Education Programme, Karachi (HREP Karachi) in the Australian conference, and was nominated as the spokesperson on Asian experiences on the final day of the conference.

GSR has won numerous prizes at national level competitions organized by the Pakistan National Council of the Arts, educational institutions and HREP Karachi. A GSR student, Mariam Peer was one of the four students selected from Pakistan to attend a children’s conference in Hiroshima, Japan in 2001. Mariam Abdullah from GSR was selected as a delegate for the 12th International Children’s Health Conference in Islamabad in April 2003 under the auspices of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan. Nabiha Abdullah was one of four students selected by HREP Karachi to attend a students’ editorial meeting to produce a book on human rights authored by Pakistani students.

At the international level, GSR won the prestigious 2002 Peace Pillar Award for its Peace and Human Rights Education Program, selected among the 6,000 member-schools of UNESCO’s Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) globally. CPHRE/GSR is a leading and proactive member of ASPnet.

GSR contributed in a major way in its capacity as ASPnet school in Pakistan’s Honorable Mention in the 2000 Human Rights Education Award of UNESCO.

Future Strategies

There are several private sector initiatives on peace and human rights education programs in Pakistan. However, greater impact and wider dissemination of these programs is possible only through the public sector education system and the public-private partnership initiatives. The government of Pakistan launched the National Plan of Action for Human Rights Education in December 2001 during the celebration of the International Human Rights Day orga-

nized by CPHRE/GSR. The Ministry of Education made substantial progress in integrating peace and human rights education into the school curriculum, developed resource materials, trained master trainers, and initiated peace and human rights education programs in public schools. Common problems encountered in these initiatives have been identified such as the lack of opportunity for teachers to study and apply new ideas in teaching human rights, and resistance from teachers who fear that peace and human rights education is an additional burden. These problems can be overcome by a stronger commitment on the part of teachers/educators and all stakeholders in the program. Capacity-building of teachers has to be taken as a priority since teachers are a lynch pin in any peace and human rights education program.

Only concerned and committed national leaders and policymakers can promote human rights education in schools, communities, business, as well as in public policy. With nationally and internationally well-documented ethnic conflicts and human rights abuses existing, they should provide the impetus for renewed focus on developing a discrimination-free society.

There is no doubt that schools are a natural site for transforming society into a more rights-conscious society. However, we are unable to calculate the extent to which the good work

done at schools is being undone by the environment outside the school, the parents, the law enforcing agencies, and the community. In order to ensure that this does not happen other members of the community particularly the media need to be coopted, receive appropriate human rights education, and be involved in awareness-raising activities.

Due to these considerations, CPHRE/GSR has identified the following strategies as means of addressing the problem:

- Establishment of resource centers for peace and human rights education.
- Holding of training workshops and seminars for teachers, school administrators, and members of the media.
- Activating UNESCO ASPnet school clubs to facilitate effective peace and human rights education program.
- Lobbying for national, and sub-regional ASPnet camps and seminars to share and disseminate information, experiences and hold training.
- Development of resource materials for human rights education.

These strategies reflect the guiding principle of CPHRE/GSR in its program. The following words capture the essence of this principle:

*We all Belong to the Web of Life
By Changing Myself I can Change the World.*

ANNEX A

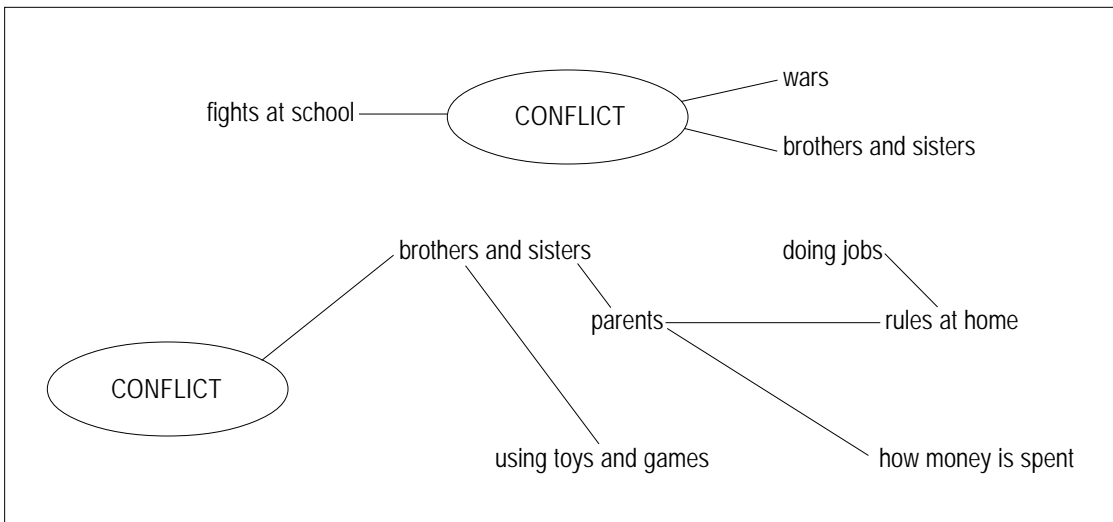
Lesson Plan on Peace

- Title: Lesson on conflict resolution
- Objective
 1. To develop in children the ability to identify conflicts.
 2. To help children analyze conflict of rights using their own experience.
- Age group: 12-15 years
- Methodology
 1. In the middle of the board write the word "conflict" in a circle.
 2. Ask the class what they think the word means.
 3. Ask for memories or thoughts it evokes. Each time something is suggested, draw a solid line from the main circle and add the word or phrase that has been suggested. When children begin to suggest ideas that are related to ideas already suggested, link them to the appropriate previous suggestion, not the main circle (so as not to discourage them).

Continue while interest remains high.

4. Ask the questions below, which draw out some general ideas about conflict.

- Questions
 - a. How could we define "conflict"?
 - b. What do the conflicts we identified have in common?
 - c. What causes conflicts?
 - d. What makes them worse?
 - e. What prevents or solves conflicts?
 - f. In the examples, whose rights are ignored by whom? Which rights?
- Evaluation and follow up
 - a. Ask the class to keep a diary of conflicts that they see for a week. Ask them to identify conflicts which are solved in a useful way, conflicts which waste a lot of time, or which recur a lot. It may be useful to sort these conflicts into categories. For example, friendly/ angry, simple/ confusing, violent/ nonviolent. Tell the class that stepping back from a conflict and analyzing it is a first step for solving it in a way that respects the rights of everyone involved.
 - b. Review the written work of the follow up.



ANNEX B

Lesson Plan on Human Rights

- Title: Lesson on Diversity and Acceptance
- Objective
 - To develop in students:
 - a. A positive picture of "difference".
 - b. Awareness that being different is alright.
- Age group: 10 to 14 years
- Methodology
 - Tell the students the story below. Then ask the questions which follow.

Way, way out in space there is a planet just like Earth. The people who live on the planet are just like us except for one thing, they only have one eye. But it is a very special eye. With their one eye they can see in the dark. They can see far, far away, and they can see straight through walls. Women on this planet have children just like on Earth. One day a strange child was born. He had two eyes! His mother and father were very upset. The boy was a happy child. His parents loved him and enjoyed looking after him. But they were worried because he was so unusual. They took him to lots of doctors. The doctors shook their heads and said "Nothing can be done." As the child grew up, he had more and more problems. Because he couldn't see in the dark, he had to carry a light. When he went to school, he could not read as well as other children. His teachers had to give him extra help. He couldn't see long distances, so he had to have a special telescope. Then he could see the other planets, like everyone else. Sometimes when he walked home from school he felt very lonely. "Other children see things I can't see," he thought. "I must be able to see things they don't see." And one exciting day, he discovered he could see something that nobody else could see. He did not see in black and white as everybody else did. He told his parents how he saw things. He took his parents outside and told them about

his thrilling discovery. They were amazed! His friends were amazed as well. He told them wonderful stories. He used words they had never heard before... like red and yellow... and orange. He talked about green trees and purple flowers. Everybody wanted to know how he saw things. He told wonderful stories about deep blue seas and waves with foaming white tops. Children loved to hear his stories about amazing dragons. They gasped as he described their skin, their eyes and their fiery breath. One day he met a girl. They fell in love. She didn't mind that he had two eyes. And then he found that she didn't mind either. He had become very famous. People came from all over the planet to hear him talk. Eventually they had a son. The child was just like the other children on the planet. He had only one eye.

- Questions
 - a. What do you think it was like to have two eyes on planet with one-eyed inhabitants?
 - b. What difficulties do you think the boy with two eyes had? Why?
 - c. What other sort of difference in their abilities do people have?
 - d. Would you be "different" if you lived somewhere else on Earth? Why? How would you like to be treated if you were "different"?
- Choices
 - a. Ask the class to imagine that they are going to a country where everyone has one eye. Ask them to write a letter to their new friends telling them how two-eyed people like to be treated.
 - b. Ask the class to re-create the story in another form. For example, as a play or a picture.
- Evaluation
 1. Review the written activity
 2. Observe the variations in responses