

Peace education for development



Training in non-violent resolution of conflict is crucial in influencing attitudes and perceptions of the self and community, and how to approach situations in which individuals may hold different views. They further build fertile ground for rebuilding and enhancing institutions that can facilitate development as conflict, poverty and under-development are inherently a result of institutional processes

Objectives

In Uganda, conflict and violence continue to directly and indirectly affect the youth. With a population of roughly 30 million, of whom 75% are under the age of 30 years, this is a highly vulnerable group that is and can become potential carriers and promoters of conflict and violence.

Peace training has brought together youths from different regions and promoted cross-cultural understanding and awareness as well as celebrated the unique linguistic, ethnic and cultural realities in Uganda.

Peace clubs and peace committees have augmented non-violence through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, improved livelihoods through engaging in income generating activities and enhanced the social and cultural ties that hold communities together.

The youth who have been involved in non-violence training are more forward looking and optimistic about development initiatives as they have the hope that their investments/inputs will still be available in the long run. With the youth embracing non-violence, stronger institutions that can enhance development are being built.

Additional information

Africa is the most violent continent. More than half of this region is engaged in violence. The young people are not excluded from the violence. They are affected both directly and indirectly as combatants, children of combatants, wives and husbands of combatants, witnesses and observers to violence, and engaging in violence against their families, peers and communities. Peace is a precondition for any social and economic development.

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Young people

Devising educational measures with a focus on building skills in crisis prevention and peace building could help prevent violent and armed conflict. This approach rests on the growing awareness that youth are dynamic agents of peace, and instead of being part of the problem, they should become part of the solution. This perspective emphasizes the role of young people as peace builders and allows them to help sustain peace, instead of responding violently to looming conflict (UN World Youth Report, 2005).

Peace education is a holistic and participatory process that provides a platform for all aspects of humanity – human rights, non-violent responses to conflict, social and economic justice, gender equity, environmental sustainability and human interaction. Peace education can improve critical thinking, cooperation and responsible action as it encourages deep reflection. It also promotes multiculturalism as it is based on the values of dignity, equality and respect. Peace education prepares students for democratic participation in all aspects of life beginning with their societies and communities. (adapted from the Global Campaign for Peace Education)

Peace education therefore reinforces the individual dignity and respect for mankind and promotes the attitude and behaviour that despite all the existing differences, co-existence is still possible and through non-violence concrete structures and institutions can be created based on respect, dignity, transparency and consensus.