

# Where Am I a Citizen? Exploring Peace Education as Citizenship Education in Refugee Camps: An Analysis in Dadaab

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## *Abstract:*

As the world addresses the current refugee crisis, the international relief community and host countries are working to meet the needs of refugees. Access to quality education is an inalienable human right and is a basic necessity of life for all refugees. Particularly for those within camps who have escaped protracted conflicts, peace education can encourage refugees to mitigate conflict within the camp and prepare them for rebuilding their lives after repatriation or resettlement. This policy brief examines two peace education programs in the Dadaab Refugee Camp complex running from 1998-2005 and 2012-2015. This brief analyzes the messaging and purpose of the two programs and how the programs address conflict and citizenship within the refugee camp and beyond. As the world's population of refugees grows, this is a critical time to assess and learn from past and current peace education programs to inform future education programming.

**Keywords:** Refugees; education in emergencies; peace education; conflict; gender-based violence; citizenship education

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*I know nothing about Somalia. The only government I know is UNHCR.*

—Mohammad Abdula, Dadaab Refugee Camp resident, age 24<sup>1</sup>

In 2014, the then UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres warned that the Syrian refugee crisis “has become the biggest humanitarian emergency of our era, yet the world is failing to meet the needs of refugees and the countries hosting them” (Edwards, 2014). While Guterres spoke about refugees from Syria, his message could also apply to the needs of *all* refugees, including those who have lived in camps for decades like the refugees in Dadaab, Kenya.

Education is a critical need for all refugees, and programs to foster community-building and peacekeeping within refugee camps are vital to reduce stress in a tense living environment. Perhaps much in the way citizenship education builds a community that adopts shared values, peace education for refugees may be an effective method to build communities that embrace conflict mitigation and cooperative peacemaking. UNHCR and non-governmental organizations have implemented peace education programs in various communities in conflict, including within the refugee camps in Dadaab. To best support the millions of refugees around the world, analyzing current and recent peace education programs will help determine if peace education can give learners tools to make peace and contribute to building communities that embrace peacemaking.

To explore the question of peace education as citizenship education, this brief examines two peace education programs in Dadaab. After comparing similarities of peace education and citizenship education, the brief goes on to analyze the topics covered in the peace education curriculum, the messages conveyed, and the impact of the programs’ lessons on learners’ lives in the camps. The brief concludes with recommendations for the design and implementation of peace education programs for refugees in camps.

### **Peace Education as Citizenship Education**

Defining citizenship for stateless individuals is challenging. Refugees are no longer considered citizens of their home country, nor are they citizens of their host country, yet they live in large communities that roughly resemble citizenries. One might interpret refugees living in a camp as “citizens” of that camp. The citizenry of a refugee camp is unique in that the individuals have not chosen to live together in the confined space but have come to the camp to seek protection from conflict or an emergency in their home country. Community-building among refugees in camps is critical to make and maintain peace in a stressful environment. As such, the international relief community and host countries must find ways to foster community building among refugees.

Citizenship education shapes a group of individuals into a community with a shared identity and shared values. Similarly, those living in refugee camps can also form an imagined citizenry, yet conventional citizenship education does not meet this end. Instead, peace education could serve a similar function to build a community that embraces a shared identity of peace and respect among its members.

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<sup>1</sup> McKenzie & Swails, 2014

To explore this idea of peace education as citizenship education, one must identify the similarities between the two. Considering the precarious legal status of refugees, Keating's (2016) broad descriptions of citizenship and citizenship education fit this context. Keating describes a citizen as an individual who follows a set of agreed-upon conventions (laws, rights, civic norms, political identities, and behavior) to claim membership in a socio-political community (2016). In Keating's view, citizenship education ought to equip the learner with skills for critical thinking, conflict-free problem solving, and public and intercultural communication.

Concerning the function of citizenship education, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argue that citizenship education encourages learners to become one of three types of citizens:

- A Personally Responsible Citizen who individually contributes to her community by volunteering, obeying laws, and voting.
- A Participatory Citizen who actively engages local, state, and national politics and understands the workings of government. This type of citizen is active in community-based efforts and understands the workings of various levels of government.
- A Justice-Oriented Citizen who confronts injustices and social problems by analyzing social, political, and economic drivers of inequality. A justice-oriented citizen participates in social change movements.

In order to explore the idea of peace education acting as citizenship education for refugees in camps, the definition and function of peace education in the camp context should resemble that of citizenship education. UNICEF (2012) defines peace education as "a natural tool to prevent conflict and to promote social, economic, and political justice amongst a nation's youngest citizens," providing learners with tools to resolve conflict and respect human diversity (p. 4). Peace education can contribute to peacemaking, building, and keeping<sup>2</sup> within refugee camps while encouraging learners to form a shared, communal understanding of conflict mitigation and respect. Similar to Keating's description of citizenship education and Westheimer's and Kahne's categories of the function of citizenship education, peace education aims to teach learners to be aware of political, social, and economic systems at play in their daily lives and to equip them with critical thinking and conflict resolution skills to build peace.

A critical function of citizenship education is communicating to learners their rights as citizens of a nation. Peace education must also communicate to learners their rights in order to establish a communal understanding of the equality of all its members in order to make and maintain peace. Under the Education For All framework (2000-2015) and the current Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030), actors in the international education development field have endorsed the adoption of rights-based education for all learning contexts. This education approach focuses on teaching a learner about her human rights, empowering her to claim her rights, and identifying those responsible for protecting those rights. According to UNESCO and UNICEF, rights-based education can contribute to social cohesion, respect for non-violent conflict resolution, and positive social transformation (2007). Since a rights-based education

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<sup>2</sup> Peacemaking uses diplomatic methods to bring sides of a conflict to a negotiated agreement to cease conflict. Peacebuilding creates the political/social conditions that will prevent resurgences of violence after a resolution of conflict. Peacekeeping maintains a cessation of fighting.

approach endorses peacebuilding, it is appropriate to incorporate this approach into peace education curricula and programming.

To further explore the concept of peace education as citizenship education for refugees, the table below highlights the similarities and differences between a conventional citizenship education program and a peace education program within a refugee camp:

*Table 1: Comparing Components of Citizenship Education & Peace Education<sup>3</sup>*

<b>Conventional Citizenship Education</b>	<b>Refugee Camp Peace Education</b>
1: <u>Curriculum</u> is provided by the national and/or local government	1: <u>Curriculum</u> is provided by IGOs or NGOs
2: Students learn to be citizens of their <u>country</u>	2: Students learn to be citizens of their <u>camp</u> and eventually of their home country or country of resettlement
3: <u>Rights of the citizen</u> are protected by the national and local government	3: <u>Rights of the refugee</u> are protected by the host country with support from UNHCR

The conventional citizenship curriculum carries the message of the body producing it. In a refugee camp setting, the international body that produces the curriculum—UNHCR in the case of the Dadaab camp peace education program—controls the message of the curriculum. Points 2 and 3 are more complicated. The 1951 Refugee Convention provides basic legal protections for refugees: refugees must follow the laws of their host country, and the host country must extend the rights of its citizenry to refugees but is not obligated to grant refugees citizenship. UNHCR is the agency mandated to protect and serve refugees. UNHCR, however, is not a supranational organization, so it does not assume a host country's responsibilities to protect refugees' rights. Rather, the agency's field staff are tasked with preventing conditions that lead to assault and will offer victims of assault legal assistance when possible (UNHCR, 2002).

### **The Dadaab Refugee Camp**

The Dadaab Refugee Camp is an apt location to explore peace education as citizenship education because the large population resembles a citizenry, and peace education programs have taken place in the camp. Since its establishment in 1991, refugees primarily from Somalia have come to the camp to escape violent extremism of Al Shabaab, clan conflict, and conditions of drought and famine. Today, Dadaab is the largest refugee camp in the world with over 240,000 inhabitants (UNHCR, 2017). The camp has a high youth population, and of the 150,000 children and youth in the camp, a third of them are not enrolled in school (UNHCR Kenya, 2017). UNHCR manages the camp, and NGOs contribute supplies, services, and programming. Funding for UNHCR's operations is unstable and often falls below what is requested to provide necessities and security.

Three overarching categories of conflict occur in Dadaab: interpersonal conflict among refugees, gender-based violence, and conflict between authorities and refugees. Concerning security in the camp, refugees of opposing groups often find themselves living together within

<sup>3</sup> Table contents derived from Keating (2016) and Westheimer and Kahne (2004)

the confines of the camp. The stress of supply shortages can lead to conflict among refugees. Violence has escalated quickly between opposing groups, leading to verbal clashes, physical and sexual assault, and rape.

Occurrences of gender-based violence are exceedingly high. Over 97% of gender-based violence is committed against women and girls, and these abuses include beatings and sexual abuse in their homes, genital mutilation, early marriage, and rape and sexual assault (Danish Relief Council, 2016). While UNHCR provides victims with services, victims report feeling reluctant to raise issues to authorities, fearing social stigma and rejection from their family and community (IRC, 2011).

The Somali extremist group Al Shabaab has coordinated attacks in Kenya, including within and around Dadaab. The Kenyan government has repeatedly threatened to shut down Dadaab as it suspects Al Shabaab fighters are harbored in the camp. The Kenyan police have conducted violent raids in the camp, arresting, detaining, and beating men, women, and children. UNHCR is aware of police misconduct and signed an agreement with the Kenyan government to increase police presence in the camp and to establish a community police program. While the government has provided more security personnel and equipment to the camp, the community policing program has been slow to start (UNHCR, 2015).

The forms of violence—fighting amongst refugees, gender-based violence, and police brutality—are egregious violations of refugees’ fundamental human rights and are sources of discord in the camp. This situation reflects two critical issues: first, the authorities responsible for protecting refugees’ rights may be unequipped to appropriately defend those rights. Second, refugees may be unaware of their human rights or rights as residents of Dadaab, and they may not know which authorities are charged with protecting those rights. Referring to the UNICEF definition of peace education as “a tool to prevent conflict and to promote social, economic, and political justice,” a rights-based peace education program can serve two functions: first, to inform learners of their rights and second, to provide learners with tools to individually and communally mitigate conflict and embrace peacemaking.

### **Peace Education Programs in Dadaab**

In 1997, UNHCR developed the Peace Education Programme (PEP) for communities in conflict across Africa, including those in the Dadaab Refugee Camp.<sup>4</sup> From 1998-2005, the PEP engaged primary school students, secondary school students, and adults in the community.<sup>5</sup> The PEP had two main objectives: first, to create constructive behaviors for learners to handle problems peacefully and, second, to reduce behaviors that lead to conflict. The program presented a skills-building curriculum equipping learners with cooperation skills, communication skills, and skills to prevent conflict and make peace. The program stated it took a rights-based approach and summarized the Human Rights Declaration and the Convention

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<sup>4</sup> For this PEP evaluation, I reviewed the three facilitator training manuals, three teacher training manuals, the community workshop manual, community course booklet, and background notes for teachers and trainers. These sources are shared electronically on the INEE Peace Education website (see Bibliography for citation).

<sup>5</sup> Teachers presented PEP lessons for 30 minutes a week for 28 weeks of the school year, and community members attended weekly PEP workshops for 12 weeks.

on the Rights of the Child for the adult and secondary school learners. It trained teachers to model positive, non-violent behavior,<sup>6</sup> taught active listening and cooperation, and provided learners with tools to reduce conflict. By 2002, the PEP reached 70,000 participants (all enrolled students in the formal schools and 4,110 adults) (Obura, 2002).

An evaluation of PEP found that the program reached its main objectives to equip learners with behavior and communication tools to mitigate conflict and promote peace. Participants reported that they felt personally responsible to maintain peace with neighbors and making peace when confronted with conflict. However, there were critical gaps in the rights-based peace education curriculum. To address forms of violence in the camp, this curriculum largely equipped learners with pacifist tools to mitigate conflict. Though the curriculum rightfully encouraged learners to resolve minor conflicts on their own, it did not discuss how they could report serious issues with authorities, nor did it address abuses of power by police or others.

Concerning gender-based violence, the PEP briefly discussed rape and sexual assault, providing learners with a few phrases to deter an assaulter, but only in the adult curriculum. While the curriculum did support gender equality, it did not give tools to learners to prevent or report gender-based violence, and it completely ignored issues of domestic violence, genital mutilation, and emotional abuse. The evaluation found that only 22% of participants in the adult program were women and there were significantly fewer female facilitators and teachers in the program (Obura, 2002). Also, as most enrolled students were boys, this peace education program reached a largely male audience.

The Peace Education Programme ended in 2005. In its stead, UNHCR and the Dutch government created the Peacebuilding, Education, and Advocacy (PBEA) program in 2012 for primary and secondary school students. This program was activity-based and provided students with tools to make peace. Primary school students learned communication and problem-solving skills, secondary school students learned about peaceful competition through sports, and older adolescents learned job skills through a vocational program. PBEA reached 62,250 participants, a slightly smaller number of participants than PEP. Like PEP, PBEA encouraged individuals to adopt behaviors and communication tools to make peace and avoid and mitigate conflict. An evaluation found that the program met this behavior and attitude change goal as it found that PBEA participants felt more accepting of having a neighbor of another clan (UNICEF, 2015). A notable distinction between the two programs is that PBEA did not explicitly take a rights-based approach nor did it teach students about their human rights. Like PEP, this program also neglected to address misconduct from authorities or gender-based violence, a significant shortcoming since evaluators found that domestic disputes were a main source of violence that participants experienced.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

These skills-based peace education programs encourage learners to be respectful, peaceful citizens of the Dadaab Refugee Camp. This goal falls in line with the merged understanding of peace education and citizenship education to build peace in communities. Relating PEP and PBEA to Westheimer and Kahne's three citizen model, these programs encourage the adoption

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<sup>6</sup> The manuals specifically banned the use of corporal punishment in the classroom, and teachers and facilitators were taught to not use this form of punishment through PEP trainings.

of one type over the others. The PEP curriculum guides learners to become personally responsible citizens. To this end, a religious leader who participated in PEP expressed, “My own personal view is that each and every person in the community, young and old, is responsible for peace because the responsibility given to us by Allah is more important and precious than any responsibility given to us by the community” (Obura, 2002, p. 14). In this way, PEP successfully addressed building peace to reduce interpersonal conflict.

Concerning the other two types of citizens, adopting a participatory model is a challenge, as formal systems of government do not exist within the camp. The UNHCR likely would not encourage a justice-oriented model through its peace education programming. A justice-oriented citizenry in Dadaab, in UNHCR’s view, might only contribute to unrest and not build peace. Additionally, a justice-oriented citizen could be encouraged to speak out against the abuses of power by the Kenyan police and other authorities in the camps. While this approach could identify ways to make positive change in the camp, this could further strain relationships between the refugees, Kenyan authorities, and UNHCR.

In elemental ways, the two peace education programs in Dadaab mirror Keating’s description of citizenship education and fall in line with one of Westheimer and Kahne’s functions of citizenship education. The objectives of the PEP and PBEA programs suggest that peace education could function as a stand-in for citizenship education within a camp environment. In order to build communities that embrace peace, it is essential that peace education programs take a human rights-based approach. Such an approach aims to teach its learners about individuals’ human rights and how to respect these rights as a community. While the Dadaab programs fell short of fully applying a rights-based curriculum, there is potential for rights-based peace education to function as community-building programming. Further research on such programming’s outcomes and improvements to current programs are needed. Learning from PEP and PBEA, for future peace education programming within refugee camps, I present these recommendations:

**Teach learners about their rights.** All learners, regardless of age, should know about their individual rights, how to protect their own rights, and who beyond themselves is charged with guarding those rights. While gender-based violence may be presented as a personal safety and health issue in other programs, it needs to be a part of this rights-based conversation within peace education programming. Teaching individuals about their inalienable rights establishes a foundation of respect of these rights among members of the larger community.

**Engage women and girls as leaders and learners of peace.** The PEP evaluation found its implementers did not adequately incorporate female facilitators nor reach out to women to participate. In order to enact positive change for all, peace education programming needs to have equal numbers of male and female facilitators and teachers. Having more female representation among the instructors may encourage women to participate in peacebuilding programs. In addition to increasing the number of female instructors, program implementers should reach out to women to participate who may not be enrolled in formal schooling or who are not prominent members of the community.

**Reach out to informal learners and incorporate community-building activities.**

Implementers should engage the large population of out-of-school children, youth, and adults in the camps. The 2002 PEP evaluation found a strong relationship between illiteracy and the use of physical violence to solve disputes. Peace education messaging will not be successfully adopted throughout if those who are out of school or illiterate are excluded from the

conversation. To reach more individuals, peace education programs should incorporate non-school based outreach activities to connect with more members of the community outside of the formal education setting.

**Discuss with learners how to raise issues of serious violations.** While individuals can mediate many conflicts, some conflicts must be handled by authorities. Peace education should identify the authorities charged with protecting refugees and explain the path to seeking justice.

**Bring together police, IGO authorities, and communities to prevent violence.** Refugee leaders, police, and UNHCR are pivotal actors to maintaining peace and security in the camps. Together, they should discuss community-sensitive and culturally-sensitive approaches to security and build trust in the camp. Fostering communication between community members and authorities can build trust between refugees and camp authorities, which can result in more effective violence prevention and reporting. This recommendation calls for improving access to legal justice for offenses amongst refugees and between police and refugees.

The world must meet the needs of refugees and support the countries hosting them. This is a critical time to examine and improve rights-based peace education to best serve the most vulnerable in our global community.



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