Reconciliation through global citizenship education

Programme paper

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The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

Acknowledgements

Reconciliation through Global Citizenship Education

The context

The move from a violent past to a more peaceful society is a complex process in which education can play a key role. While ending conflict is part of peacebuilding, so is confronting the legacies of violent histories, changing behaviours, and establishing institutions, systems and cultures that can sustain peace. Learning to live together in the aftermath of histories of colonialism, genocide, apartheid, war or slavery requires a deep process of reconciliation.

Drawing on academic research and experiences of educators and policy-makers, this paper explores how Global Citizenship Education (GCED) contributes to long lasting peacebuilding in reconciliation contexts, fostering collective responsibility and action to one another and to the planet. This academic review and key learnings from the application of GCED to concrete reconciliation contexts, are directed at policy-makers concerned with reconciliation education within their own divided societies.

GCED: A foundational framework for learning in post-conflict contexts

Encompassing cognitive, social and emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning, GCED connects the local and global, presenting learners with an understanding of our planet as interconnected, interdependent and relational. It opens space for multiple and marginalised voices and encourages learners to question their assumptions and adherence to dominant perspectives.

A shared vision for reconciliation

'Reconciliation' takes on specific meanings in different contexts but is consistently understood as a process and not an end point. As such, reconciliation brings together individual and collective concerns in acknowledging past and current harms, bringing justice, repairing damage, reconstructing trust and acting to create a more equitable and peaceful society. Reconciliation seeks healing and forgiveness while recognizing, without undermining or minimizing, the experiences of victims in seeking peace. Reconciliation involves both historical thinking and a future orientation, as it confronts and addresses past (and current) wrongs, while taking action to build a different future.

GCED for reconciliation

The transformative pedagogy of GCED is especially suited for reconciliation, as it aspires to alter existing attitudes, values and behaviours through a learner-centred approach that fosters discovery of how to participate positively and constructively in society. While GCED addresses the values, attitudes and perspectives of individuals, these are connected to histories, contexts and systems in order that learners might understand how their actions contribute to the larger social order. For GCED to apply to reconciliation, it must therefore be contextual, confronting students with violent legacies but also drawing on local values or concepts that support reconciliation. It may also support learners with skills for non-violent interaction to enable peacebuilding communication and collaboration.

Four educational initiatives in Colombia, South Africa, Canada and Iraq

These examples exemplify how GCED principles may be applied for reconciliation.

- **Colombia:** *Aulas en Paz* **(Classrooms in Peace)** shows us how the practice of democracy in the classroom, supported by the development of social and emotional skills associated with GCED, may help to interrupt cycles of violence within learners' personal lives.
- **South Africa: Facing History and Facing Ourselves** shows the role of historical thinking in GCED for reconciliation and how history teachers must be supported to process their own trauma and reconcile their own positioning when teaching about a violent past.
- **Canada: Project of Heart** demonstrates how GCED may support learners and teachers in co-creating reconciliation through inquiry and action.
- **Iraq: 'Nobody's Listening' Virtual Reality** experience project explores how technology can be used to build understanding of genocide, strengthen social and emotional skills and contribute to reconciliation processes.

Together, these initiatives bring to life how GCED may be nuanced and applied within specific locations. Even where GCED is not explicitly named, initiatives described as 'human rights education', 'peace education', 'dealing with difficult pasts through education', etc. exhibit educational methods that are illustrative of GCED.

1. Introduction

To promote reconciliation that leads to lasting peace, it is necessary to rethink education. Legacies of violence and ongoing structural injustices in contexts of colonialism, genocide, apartheid, war and slavery necessitate education that fosters collective responsibility to one another and the planet to build a different future together. To create lasting peace in societies seeking reconciliation, GCED can provide students and educators with the tools to face how people in their societies are unequally positioned, help bridge divides and enact change.

The contribution of GCED to reconciliation education has been recognized by policy-makers in recent years. *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4* emphasized GCED as a key contributor to promoting the principle of learning to live together peacefully and sustainably (cf. Target 4.7), an innovation over previous frameworks. This trend continues in UNESCO's 2015 publication, *Rethinking Education*, which links sustainability, peace and social justice (p. 10 & 32), and in the recently revised 1974 Recommendation on Education for Peace and Human Rights, International Understanding, Co-operation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship, and Sustainable Development, specifically its 24th paragraph on teaching and learning of history.

Drawing on methods and theories from different fields including peace education, human rights education, citizenship education, and education for intercultural understanding, GCED contributes a multifaceted approach to issues on an interconnected and interdependent planet, where local and global dynamics are interlinked. It not only focuses on so-called 'global issues' but promotes consideration of local conflicts and injustices through a global lens. Rather than prescribing behaviours, GCED develops critical thinking, dialogue, cooperation and self-reflection to enable learners to approach complex issues and make informed choices on how to move forward together. Through formal and non-formal education, GCED prepares learners with the knowledge, skills and values to make ethical decisions and participate in social change, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the future (UNESCO, 2015a, p. 14-15).

GCED holds great potential for contexts seeking reconciliation, but how best to meet the restrictions and challenges in fragile and violent contexts? Where there is a legacy of violence, atrocity crimes, unresolved or still active tensions between national groups and/or with neighbouring countries, GCED may be perceived as naive at best or even provocative. More immediate demands such as preserving balance between parties, security, securing basic services or re-booting the economy may take priority over reconciliation education. UNESCO's mandate is built on the premise that lasting peace is more than putting an end to conflict and stimulating economic growth. It is about triggering a profound shift in mindset and behaviour, and establishing the cultural, social and political institutions that can sustain and defend peace. This implies engaging with difficult issues and envisioning education as transformational.

This document zeroes in on how concepts of GCED and reconciliation are addressed in current research and practice and aims to provide existing grounds and future considerations for policy-makers concerned with reconciliation through education.

2. Concepts of GCED and reconciliation

a) What do we mean by GCED?

GCED promotes fundamental values in education such as non-discrimination, respect for diversity and solidarity (UNESCO, 2017b). It draws on the methods and ideas behind well-established educational concepts such as human rights education, education for sustainable development, education for international/intercultural understanding and education for peace (UNESCO, 2013, p.3; see Monaghan and Spreen, 2017). There is no clear-cut definition of GCED and interpretations are also influenced by different historical understandings of 'citizenship'. While citizenship usually refers to formal legal membership of a politically constituted entity, it can also refer to the exercise of certain rights and duties within a particular location or in relation to others. The concept of global citizenship relies on a sense of shared responsibility to promote peace, human rights, sustainability and well-being for everyone. But the concept of belonging to a global community cannot be separated from national citizenship, which dictates individual and collective rights, opportunities, restrictions and (in)equalities (see Abdi, 2015). Defined within a nation, these factors also shape an individual's participation in the global community. GCED negotiates between preserving diverse national, cultural and Indigenous ways of life while working to transform injustices and inequities, crossing local, national, and global scales.

Despite the many conceptualizations of GCED, UNESCO considers that there are common features to this approach to education. Chiefly, GCED emphasizes three central dimensions of learning: cognitive, social and emotional and

behavioural. At the cognitive level, students should gain knowledge, competencies and the ability to critically engage with global, regional, national and local issues, as well as the interconnectedness and interdependencies between these scales. The social and emotional dimension fosters a general feeling of belonging to a world community, an awareness of values and responsibilities as well as empathy, solidarity and respect towards difference and diversity. Learners should be equipped to act responsibly, at local, national and global levels, for a more sustainable and peaceful world (UNESCO, 2015b, pp.15-16).

b)   What do we mean by reconciliation?

The term reconciliation gained international prominence in the late 1990s as a result of processes and measures introduced to address colonial history in post-settler societies, such as the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) in Australia and particularly the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa (Hattam et al., 2012, p. 3). In Rwanda, following the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi, reconciliation was implemented through community-based Gacaca courts and via the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. From 2021, the Commission was replaced by the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement to focus on national unity, historical memory and citizenship education.

The TRC in post-apartheid South Africa created an understanding of reconciliation that heavily emphasised forgiveness. However, several authors say there should be a clear separation between forgiveness and reconciliation (Rothfield, 2008; Hattam et al., 2012). When linked with forgiveness, the term reconciliation can create feelings of resistance among certain victim groups. A key concern is that reconciliation processes may lead to premature resolution involving compromise or demanding 'forgiveness' from victims without providing sufficient 'justice' (Huyse, 2003). Bloomfield (2006) therefore points to the importance of an open-ended reconciliation process that does not anticipate forgiveness but in fact preserves the 'right not to reconcile' (p. 24).

Designing (or redesigning) democratic processes in transition countries frequently involves reconciliation, whereas in the context of established or consolidated western democracies, the emphasis is frequently on social inclusion. In most countries, elements of both movements are present. Canada is a good example of this: reconciliation means the renewal of the relationship between the Indigenous (First Nation, Metis and Inuit) and non-Indigenous peoples within a pluralistic society, as well as the development of a more inclusive concept of citizenship.

Overwhelmingly, and in agreement with reflections from global comparisons of peace and reconciliation (McCarthy and DeBartolo, 2013, p. 136), reconciliation is viewed as a long-term, open process 'through which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future' (Bloomfield., 2003, p. 12). It must, without exception, include all members of society, bring about a change in attitudes, opinions, feelings and motivations and build comprehensive relationships at grassroots level (Bloomfield, 2006, p. 7; Cole, 2007, p. 17; Bar-Tal et al., 2010).

The Swiss concept of *Dealing with the Past* (2018) seeks to encompass the diverse dimensions of transition towards reconciliation at individual and societal levels. Four key principles shape this approach which collectively recognize the rights of individual victims and the obligations of states: the right to know, the right to justice, the right to reparation and the guarantee of non-recurrence.

As is evident from these complex dimensions, reconciliation is a multi-stage, non-linear transition. It is simultaneously orientated towards the past, through efforts to address past injustices and to develop a mutual historical perspective, as well as towards the future, through the construction of non-violent relationships and a more equitable social order (Huyse, 2003, p. 19; Psaltis 2012a; Psaltis et al., 2017).

3. Reflections on GCED and reconciliation processes

In regions of the world shaped by protracted or recently ended conflict or violence, 'learning to live together' is a complex process. The transition from a violent past to a stable and more equitable present is not simply achieved through peace on the surface. Rather, it is a difficult process involving the recognition and examination of injustices committed and violence experienced. Reconstruction of trust is also key for a process of reconciliation to be initiated within a divided society. Education plays a central role in this process.

Existing research on GCED and reconciliation

The relationship between GCED and reconciliation has already been explored in a few contexts.

GCED for reconciliation	Context	Description
Conflict resolution (Torres, 2017)	United States of America	- work with new models of conflict resolution and negotiation
Decolonizing praxis (Hattam and Mathews, 2012)	Australia	- question ethnocentric structures and worldviews - create new conditions for dialogue
Dialogue (Komesaroff, 2008)	Various	- collaborate across different perspectives - work together towards a new production of meaning
Critical reflection (Reilly and Niens, 2014)	Northern Ireland	- move beyond tolerance and sense of common humanity - critically analyse social construction of identities and communities
Focusing on values (Waghid, 2018)	South Africa	- explore values through disruptive encounters with others - expand moral imaginations
Postcolonial visioning (Davids, 2018)	South Africa	- imagine new relations that have not yet come to be
Sharing narratives (Lengelle, Jardine and Bonnar, 2018)	Canada	- share personal stories for cultural healing

GCED as transformative pedagogy

The common thread throughout these approaches is to consider GCED as a transformative pedagogy that 'nurtures greater consciousness in and around real-life issues' (UNESCO, 2014, p. 21). Transformative pedagogy is central to UNESCO's vision for GCED. It is a learner-centred, value-based, practice-oriented education design that aims at changing previously adopted attitudes, values and behaviours. It enables the learner to grow, understand, discover and consequently develop into a positive and constructive member of a global society (MGIEP, 2017, p. 35).

Reconciliation often aims for personal and interpersonal transformation but also for systemic change. This transformation relates not only to individual and interpersonal life but also to social and political spheres. Transformational GCED for reconciliation supports learners to understand conflict actors, issues, causes and power relations through an inquiry-based process that helps them consider actions for peacebuilding (APCEIU, 2019, p. 31). GCED must therefore connect individual experiences to histories, contexts and systems.

Considerations for GCED in reconciliation contexts

First, the three most common criticisms directed at GCED must be addressed relating to content, structure and implementation.

(1) *Content*

The concept of GCED is criticized as prioritizing global questions over local topics. There is a lack of clarity on the one hand regarding how action at a local level should bring about global change and on the other regarding the relevance of GCED for the actualities of life in specific national contexts, with all the associated challenges (UNESCO, 2018, p.7).

These criticisms have been addressed in a number of UNESCO publications that recommend GCED is adapted to local conditions (Robiolle Moul, 2017, p. 4; Deardorff et al., 2018) in its implementation. Further, 'GCED promotes understanding of and acting on local issues in a global context' (APCEIU, 2019, p. 15), applying international agreements to local contexts and encouraging trans-national comparisons, dialogues and solidarities. Such links between global and local in GCED thus enable comparative yet contextual approaches to reconciliation.

(2) *Structure*

A structural criticism of GCED refers to its Western, Eurocentric nature (Abdi, 2015; Andreotti and de Souza, 2012). These critiques draw attention to the ways Western knowledge is taken as universal and becomes foundational to educational approaches and practices under certain expressions of GCED moving non-Western knowledges, cultures, peoples and practices into the margins. It also maintains the colonial authority of the West.

In contrast, critical postcolonial approaches to GCED rely on different knowledge systems, through education that:

> ...can effectively and inclusively respond to the realities of lived citizenship contexts that are not fixed or static but are active and dynamically shifting as demanded by the contexts and relational categories that sustain them. (Abdi, 2015, p. 23)

GCED can contribute to reconciliation by valuing knowledges that have been oppressed and using these to question powerful, universalized assumptions. By embracing a pluralization of ideas, GCED can also foster meaningful engagement across epistemic divides.

(3) *Implementa*tion

One challenge facing GCED implementation is the possibility of a political context that does not allow open debate about GCED, address taboos or acknowledge unspoken pain. Restrictive political and educational frameworks may not encourage schools to apply GCED, for fear of re-igniting tensions in the classroom that put learners at risk and ill-prepared teachers under psychological pressure. However, democratic processes in school governance that engage learners in dialogue, such as decision-making, participatory teaching methods and peer mediation for example, can enable GCED principles to be transferred to everyday school life and can underpin the taught material with experienced reality (see section on Colombia).

4. How can GCED be realistically implemented to foster reconciliation?

Applying GCED to foster reconciliation in individual countries and regions requires engagement with local contexts. Here, flexibility is required to create conditions that would enable an effective and harmonious implementation of the relevant educational elements. In some cases, GCED may be integrated into specific school subjects, while other contexts may warrant adoption of a more comprehensive 'whole school' approach. Beginning with the local context demands confrontation with violent legacies. To work towards reconciliation, learners may cultivate critical understanding of recent history and develop skills for non-violent interaction and communication.

Linking GCED to local contexts can also mean starting from culturally specific concepts that are based on the values and ideas within GCED, such as 'solidarity', 'respect for diversity' and 'a shared sense of humanity' (Deardorff et al., 2018). On the one hand, global ideas may be implemented into local contexts according to local traditions, and on the other, local concepts, cultural knowledge and practices may be expanded to a global level or connected across contexts (Abdi et al., 2015).

In some countries, cultural sensitivity and inclusive education is required to address the needs of students from Indigenous populations and other ethnic, racial, religious and socio-economic minorities. Such work spans individual and systemic scales:

> In Latin American countries for example there can be no GECD without an intracultural, intercultural and multilingual education for all. Promoting GCED also means promoting the decolonization of education systems and reviewing and altering any forms of exclusion that derive from this system. (UNESCO/ORLEAC, 2018, p.14)

In some places, the priority is to confront racist exclusion at an individual and structural level (see section on South Africa). In other regions, persisting tensions between national or political groups define the possibilities for any learning and must be considered when implementing GCED.

Reconciliation through GCED can be an ongoing negotiation that may reach no clear consensus but continually integrate differences into the process and engage with various ways of knowing and being.

In regions affected by crisis or those determined by a lack of infrastructure, insecurities, and human rights violations, education in general faces even more challenges. GCED might therefore be inapplicable particularly in education settings that are lacking resources, affected by conflict, are very remote or otherwise disadvantaged (UNESCO, 2018, p. 7). Against the background of armed conflicts or other experiences of violence, it is considerably more difficult to satisfactorily convey GCED principles or to develop one's own non-violent conflict management strategies (Robiolle Moul, 2017, p. 11-13). In such cases, provision of material resources and safety are inextricably bound with educational initiatives for long lasting peace.

Teaching about a contested history involving atrocity crimes is a particularly challenging task. GCED provides specific guidance on teaching about genocide, including the history of the Holocaust, and the prevention of future human rights violations and other atrocities (UNESCO, 2017a, p. 23-29). It provides guidance on how history education can be mobilized to enable critical enquiry by examining one or more situations of genocide or mass atrocity to build understanding and recognition for the causes and consequences of violence and hateful ideologies. Within this framework, UNESCO also underscores the importance of maintaining historical integrity and the accuracy of information and countering attempts to deny or distort the past though education (UNESCO, 2022).

5. Educational initiatives: Colombia, South Africa, Canada and Iraq

This section contains four examples of educational initiatives in countries that represent different post-conflict and peacebuilding contexts: Colombia, which has suffered long-term internal conflict; South Africa, a country with racial tensions and a long history of violence; Canada, a country that is uncovering its colonial past and just beginning to admit to its legacy of violence and Iraq with its history of conflict and atrocity crimes, including acts of genocide. These examples are written by experts and selected for ways they reflect and extend GCED principles in relation to specific reconciliation contexts.

1. Colombia: *Aulas en Paz* (Classrooms in Peace)

While it will take time to address Colombia's deeply divided social and political order, *Aulas en Paz* evidences how social and emotional learning and the practice of democracy within the classroom are initial components of reconciliation and peacebuilding. By comprehensively bringing GCED skills and attitudes into schools through education that addresses the whole student and community, including parents and families, this initiative contributes to breaking cycles of violence within the daily lived experiences of young people.

a) Background

Colombia has suffered an internal conflict between guerrilla, military and paramilitary forces for more than 70 years. The war, which emerged in response to social and political conditions, was fuelled by the traffic of narcotics and influenced by its criminal structure and functioning. After many attempts to build peace, an agreement was signed in 2016 between the Colombian government and the largest and most powerful guerrilla group. However, public opposition to the agreement was strong and a referendum passed by only a narrow margin, proof of the entrenched divisions within Columbian society. Human rights violations are still common (Human Rights Watch, 2019), and homicide rates remain high (Colombian Forensic Medicine Service, 2019). Reconciliation and healing are needed more than ever.

b) The role of education in reconciliation

Reconciliation in Colombia has multiple implications. On the one hand, it means carrying out the peace agreement and reincorporating thousands of ex-combatants and their families into civic life. This is especially difficult in a polarized society where nearly half the population rejected the peace agreement. Further, violence is not over and remains in both overt and latent forms. Criminal organizations are occupying the territories left by guerrillas, dissident groups remain and narcotraffic is still present.

Restorative justice, whereby offenders take responsibility for their actions and repair the harm to victims, has been recommended as one way to bring reconciliation. However, many people think this approach is not sufficient for those concerned to 'pay' for their crimes. Many wounds remain open. Reconciliation therefore requires significant dialogue, admission of guilt, and accountability, as well as the forgiveness and healing required to build new relations and trust between parties formerly at war. Reconciliation also means creating the right conditions for violence not to reproduce.

Violence has affected society in many ways, including how people relate to each other every day. There seems to be a relation between political violence, common crime and other violent manifestations in communities and families. Death is not only present in army combats but in street fights, robberies and domestic violence. Thus, reconciliation means transforming everyday relations, increasing the value of life and learning to manage conflicts peacefully (Chaux, 2003). This is especially relevant in schools, where students seem to reproduce the violent behaviour they experience outside, affecting their learning and learning environments. One way to break this cycle of violence is through the improvement of citizenship education where learners are helped to diffuse violent encounters at the interpersonal level and build citizenship capacities for peaceful engagement (Torrente and Kanayet, 2007).

c) *Aulas en Paz*

This programme was born to foster citizenship competencies for peace, consequently contributing to the implementation of several national policies. In 2004, the Colombian Ministry of Education developed a National Programme of Citizenship Competencies, recognizing education must play a key role in peacebuilding (Chaux, 2009; Chaux et al, 2004). This programme included the creation of National Standards, application of a national Test of Citizenship Competencies, participation in international evaluations such as the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study and PISA, teacher training activities, and the identification and promotion of several Citizenship Education programmes. Although much has been done to foster citizenship education in response to these policies, there is still a big gap between policy and practice. To help close this gap, *Aulas en Paz* has developed multiple tools to train, support and coach teachers for the promotion of peace through social and emotional learning.

Aulas en Paz is an evidence-based programme designed in 2005 by a research group led by Dr Enrique Chaux at the Universidad de los Andes, to provide training and pedagogic tools for teachers and schools to foster citizenship competencies that promote peaceful relationships (Chaux, 2007; Chaux, 2012; Mejia and Chaux, 2017).

The programme focuses on the development of competencies that enable students to resolve their conflicts peacefully, to prevent aggression and stop bullying. It emphasizes eight social and emotional abilities, which are aligned with GCED: empathy, assertiveness, anger management, perspective taking, creative generation of options, consideration of consequences, active listening and critical thinking. The components combine universal and targeted actions to reach all students, while providing additional support to those who need it. The universal component includes a classroom-based curriculum and parents' workshops. The targeted component, directed towards those students with higher levels of aggressive behaviour, includes extracurricular activities and family workshops.

In 15 years, more than 250,000 children in roughly 400 schools from 47 Colombian cities have been reached, and the work shared with countries like Mexico, Peru and Chile.

2. South Africa: Facing History and Facing Ourselves

In South Africa, Facing History and Facing Ourselves is proof that transformative historical education may be a key component of GCED for reconciliation. Commemoration is not sufficient; rather, how the past is remembered, as well as how South Africans of all races find themselves in their shared history, is foundational to considering present and future actions. To overcome legacies of trauma and racism, carefully designed curriculum and pedagogy are accompanied by teacher support and professional development.

a) Background

In South Africa, reconciliation is a process that continues twenty-seven years after apartheid came to an end. Race still divides South Africans. Reconciliation is also about how economic divisions may be bridged. The majority of the

population that were oppressed during apartheid still make up the majority of the unemployed, live in the poorest areas and occupy the minority of leadership positions.

Reconciliation is still far off, but a shared understanding and acceptance of the past is an important step towards it. How we remember the past, what we tell each other about the past, and how we can each find ourselves in a shared history, is an important part of reconciliation. The role of history education, therefore, along with support of history teachers specifically, is crucial in the process.

b) The role of education in reconciliation

In South Africa, the average age of a teacher is forty-three, meaning the majority grew up during apartheid. Whether they experienced it as victims or beneficiaries, history teachers are required to address colonialism and apartheid as part of the national school curriculum. But they do not stand outside of history and carry legacies of the past into the classroom, often unaware. Those legacies can bring young people together, divide them or keep them divided. History teachers, therefore, need support to understand how their past has shaped them and how they teach. How South Africans of all races understand their shared history determines how they relate to each other.

c) Facing History and Ourselves in South Africa

Since 2003, Facing History and Ourselves in South Africa – a partnership between Shikaya, a South African non-government organization and Facing History and Ourselves, an international educational and teacher development organization – has been providing support to over 10,000 teachers and school leaders so that young people are well prepared to think critically and act compassionately as engaged, democratic citizens. It combines rigorous historical analysis and the study of human behaviour to help young people better understand and respond to racism, religious intolerance and prejudice.

Professional support and classroom learning is centred on Facing History's Sequence of Study or Learning Journey which promotes historical understanding, critical thinking, empathy and social and emotional learning, providing teachers and students with a framework for a deep and shared engagement with South Africa's past, which is an important step in reconciliation.

The Sequence of Study begins by examining common human behaviours, beliefs and attitudes students can readily observe in their own lives. They explore the processes of national and collective identities that help people connect with one another but that also contribute to misunderstanding, stereotyping and conflict. Students then consider a historical case study, such as apartheid, and analyse individual decision-making processes and subsequent choices to participate, stand by or stand up in the face of injustice. Students then examine how the history they studied continues to influence their country and the world today. Finally, they consider how they might choose to participate in bringing about a more humane, just and compassionate world.

The programme offers on-going support to history teachers in the form of workshops, seminars and conferences, along with classroom resources and online support. The deliberate gathering of black and white teachers, along with other teachers of colour, has created opportunities to share stories and to learn together and from each other. These workshops have created communities of teachers who were previously divided by identity categories or lived experience and widened their view on apartheid.

3. Canada: Project of Heart

In Canada, a country where education systems have been key contributors to historical injustices towards Indigenous peoples, schools may become places where traditional hierarchies of power and knowledge are overturned according to GCED principles, with students and teachers learning and working together for reconciliation. In this context, Project of Heart shows how GCED's components of inquiry and action may bring social change.

a) Background

In recent history in Canada the term 'reconciliation' is most associated with the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), which addressed the Indian Residential School system that operated officially for over 160 years. One of five components of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA), the out of court resolution of the largest class action lawsuit in the history of Canada, the TRC was a process through which survivors educated all Canadians in their own words about the injustices they faced within the Indian Residential School system.

In the broadest of terms, most Canadians consider reconciliation to be repairing and rebuilding the relationship between Indigenous (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians. Some Canadians place sole responsibility on the federal government and the churches that operated residential schools to right the historical, political and ethical wrongs of the country. Indeed, early steps were taken in this direction in the form of

apologies delivered by the Prime Minister of Canada and the leaders of each federal political party on June 11, 2008. Further, compensation was made available to Indigenous peoples, specifically those who were forcibly removed from their homes, families and communities to be placed in Indian Residential Schools. However, we know that financial compensation is not enough and that countries, organizations and agencies do not reconcile: people reconcile.

For the survivors of Indian Residential Schools who represented their peers in the negotiations of the IRSSA, the education of Canadians in the truth regarding their treatment, experiences and impacts, both direct and intergenerational, was of highest priority. In response to truth telling, many educators recognize the importance of action for reconciliation: to learn more, to live differently. In essence, reconciliation is truth-based education for the benefit of all.

b) The role of education in reconciliation

The TRC was heavily focused on both formal and non-formal education in addressing the demands of survivors and the ignorance of non-Indigenous Canadians regarding the Indian Residential School system. In the ninety-four Calls to Action released by the TRC on June 3, 2015, the Commissioners dedicated two sections of their directives specifically to education, though nearly 80% of the actions related to education in some way. TRC Chief Commissioner, Justice Murray Sinclair, has said on many occasions: 'education is what got us here, and education is what will get us out.'

The Education Calls to Action (6-12) very pointedly called upon the federal government to address the education inequities that Indigenous, and more specifically First Nations, students face in Canada daily. Inequities include funding, relevant curricula respecting traditional knowledge, Indigenous language rights, treaty relationships and Indigenous participation in all these decisions at the family, community and national levels.

The Education for Reconciliation Calls to Action (62-65) directly align with the basic principles of GCED. Commissioners call upon all levels of government to provide funding and to collaborate with Indigenous peoples to develop Indigenous-focused, mandatory education curricula, resources, and programmes for all students across the country with the goal of *building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect.*

c) Project of Heart

The commitment and courage of classroom teachers has been key to answering the calls, not only from the TRC Commissioners, but from survivors, families and communities, to seek truth and take what some might call 'reconciliACTION'. Given the lack of resources and curricula early in the TRC process, many teachers created their own lessons, modules and resources and learned alongside their students.

Project of Heart began with a query from a student. Ottawa high school teacher Sylvia Smith immediately recognized the importance of her student's query about residential schools and acted to develop a brilliant 'inquiry to action'-based learning initiative driven by her students. Smith then reached out to engage teachers and students across the country to join the movement, which grew to be a nationally recognized programme embraced by thousands of teachers and students across Canada.

Ms Smith developed Project of Heart through a responsive and engaging process of learning with her students. She facilitated the truth-seeking journey of her students, guided them with value-based markers, trusted them as active and responsible learners and empowered them to become the authors of their own narratives and agents of change. Together, teacher and students created a step-by-step critical learning path that provided for, and in fact required, place-based adaptation of the learning to position students as players in the narrative of history and social change.

The 'inquiry to action' learning journey is fired by each student's desire for raw truth, the pursuit of knowledge and understanding are derived from primary sources and most importantly, students are challenged to undertake acts of social justice to achieve reconciliation in Canada.

4. Iraq: Nobody's Listening

Iraq has a history of conflict and atrocity crimes, including acts of genocide. To prevent future violence and support a process of reconciliation, it is imperative to acknowledge and recognize the harm and legacy of this violent past and understand their root causes through education. Furthermore, it is critical to build empathy with the victims of atrocity crimes and create opportunities for intercultural learning and dialogue with them. This case study explores the role of technology in supporting the development of historical and intercultural knowledge, empathy and compassion to further reconciliation processes.

a)   Background

The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) established evidence that genocidal acts were committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) in 2014 against the Yazidi as a religious group, noting that the intent of ISIL to destroy the Yazidi, physically and biologically, is manifest in its ultimatum delivered to all members of their community — to 'convert or die' (document S/2021/419).

According to the UNITAD report, 'thousands were killed pursuant to this ultimatum, either executed en masse, shot as they fled, or dying from exposure on Mount Sinjar as they tried to escape. Thousands more were enslaved, with women and children abducted from their families and subjected to the most brutal abuses, including serial rape and other forms of unendurable sexual violence. For many, this abuse lasted years, often leading to death. The intent of these acts was to permanently destroy the capacity of these women and children to have children and build families within the Yazidi community. Furthermore, the UNITAD established that numerous other international crimes were also committed against the Yazidi community, including extermination, enslavement, sexual violence, forcible transfer, persecution on religious and gender grounds, and conscription of children into an armed group' (United Nations, 2021).

b)   The role of digital education in reconciliation

Evidence from a Virtual Reality (VR) project in Iraq suggests that VR and other technologies can facilitate national reconciliation by inspiring positive change and encouraging attitudinal and behavioural responses to learning about the history of genocidal acts and supporting the Yazidi community. It provides a possibility for strengthening support for the principles of justice, peace, tolerance, pluralism and coexistence.

VR is a technology that immerses users in a simulated environment. Using specific perceptual cues to activate emotions (Diemer, J. 2010) it elicits presence and enables users to 'more deeply understand perspectives other than their own' (De la Peña, N. et al. 2010). Some scholars suggest that people may be less likely to care about the human rights of people 'whose hurdles are culturally, temporally and/or geospatially distant' and that inducing empathy towards them 'is best achieved by stepping into their shoes' (Bujić, M. et al. 2020; Tosh, J. 2013). The 'presence-eliciting' ability of VR allows connection to and understanding of people from a different time, location, and culture. By enabling new forms of community outreach and engagement with sensitive and difficult new or distant events like genocide, it can support reconciliation efforts by advancing social inclusion and peacebuilding (IOM, 2021).

c)   Nobody's Listening

"Nobody's Listening" is a VR technology designed in the United Kingdom with a virtual exhibition programme designed for Iraq by Yazda Organization, Upstream, the International Organization for Migration, the Digital Cultural Heritage Research Center (DCH) at Sulaimani Polytechnic University and its Nahrein Network partner, and UNESCO Chair for Genocide Prevention Studies in Islamic World at The University of Baghdad. As an immersive virtual exhibition that commemorates the genocide of the Yazidi by ISIL/Da'esh, it aims to educate young people about the catastrophic effects of genocide and violence and is a powerful tool for generating empathy with victims, deepening the sense of others' right to life, liberty and coexistence, and recognizing them as they are 'in reality'.

The VR experience, which is the centrepiece of the exhibition, transports viewers to an Internally Displaced Peoples' camp in northern Iraq using a combination of cutting-edge immersive techniques: stunning 6D of scenes from photogrammetry shot in Iraq; 360[0] footage of the destruction caused by ISIL/Da'esh; and 3D animation. The immersive experience does not simulate atrocity crimes,[1] rather the branching narrative allows viewers to listen to the story of one of three different characters: a Yazidi woman abducted and sexually enslaved; her brother, who survives a massacre; and an ISIL/Da'esh fighter who attacks the village. The VR experience was premiered at the Iraqi Parliament and University of Baghdad in December 2021.

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[1] UNESCO strongly recommends against the use of stimulation exercises which attempt to immerse the participant in an atrocity crime, which may encourage simplistic rather than critical thinking/engagement. (UNESCO, 2017a, p. 60).

VR has proved an effective tool in training, education, and communication settings, and has been increasingly applied in a range of fields, including military, health, gaming, education, business, entertainment, and cultural heritage. To empirically assess the effectiveness and short and long-term impact(s) of the Nobody's Listening VR exhibition an impact evaluation was undertaken between December 2020 and March 2021 with over 120 locals from different backgrounds in five cities (Baghdad, Sulaimani, Erbil, Duhok, and Kirkuk) across Iraq. Each evaluation session involved using the Nobody's Listening VR, followed by completing two questionnaires and an interview.

The evaluation found that the VR experience enhanced and increased 85% of participants' understanding and awareness about the genocidal acts that targeted the Yazidi community by ISIL/Da'esh. A total of 70.8% of responders also indicated that the experience changed their previous knowledge and impressions about the Yazidi culture. A smaller percentage (40.5%) said that the experience changed their previous knowledge and impressions about ISIL/Da'esh.

The VR experience had a significant cognitive and social and emotional impact. Empathy, sadness, grief, despair, fear, anger, helplessness, pain, interest, and shock were feelings pronounced individually or in combination by different participants. When asked to describe what made a significant impression on them and why, 56.6% of the respondents connected their experience with one or more of the elements of historical empathy (Historical Contextualization[2], Perspective Taking[3], and Affective Connection[4]).

Many of the answers showed critical thinking and reflections, which can potentially impact the participants' thinking, attitudes, and values and their actions and behaviours. Participants indicated that the experience encouraged their support for different forms of justice and reparation for the survivors of genocidal acts: requesting justice for them; compensating them financially, psychologically, and emotionally; improving their lives, the reconstruction of Sinjar, recognizing the crimes as genocide, raising local awareness about their culture, and reconciliation.

Lessons learned

The lessons learned in each of these cases have been profound, empowering and full of hope for the future.

a) Colombia

- *Time consistent policy*. Maintaining a consistent approach would not have been possible without political will and the articulated work of several ministers of education over time.

- *Policies are important but not enough*. To achieve the goals policies seek, programme development and implementation is fundamental. When it is not clear how a policy is (to be) implemented, the gap between policy and reality broadens.

- *Evaluation is key*. National evaluation was crucial for promoting policies, informing programmes and promoting a political message of what was considered important. Participation in international evaluation allowed comparison with international frameworks.

- *Teachers as protagonists*. Pedagogical change should be led by teachers (active and pre-service) and co-constructed with learners and with all the support and tools they need.

- *Personal transformation*. Changes begin with people who should develop their own competencies to build democratic learning environments to promote peace.

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[2] Historical Contextualization (HC) includes learning of individual historical facts, understanding facts in their wider historical context, and understanding that different views and values of past people may have been influenced by the historical context.
[3] Perspective-Taking (PT) includes appreciation of alternative beliefs, practices, values, etc., considering a topic from different perspectives, and expressing a shift in personal opinions, values, or attitudes.
[4] Affective Connection (AC) includes feeling connected to the people of the past, connecting the past to personal experiences, connecting the past with issues of the world today, and feeling or expressing emotions about the people of the past.

- *Pedagogical tools are important but not enough.* Good curricula, materials and activities are vital to peace education but must be accompanied by teacher training, coaching and continuous support.

- *Territorial dialogue.* Programmes and actions must be pertinent and make sense to the communities that implement them. Listening to communities is paramount.

- *Connections with the world.* We live in a small world and what we do in our countries must be articulated to our neighbours and the planet. There is much to learn from others, and it is much more efficient and effective when we share our experience – even our mistakes.

- *GCED as an opportunity.* Citizenship education could be further enriched by the broader perspective of GCED, particularly with global issues like violence, crime and climate change.

b) South Africa

- *Sharing the past.* The past cannot be ignored in the process of reconciliation. We need to share our stories and experiences and hear the same from 'the other'. Sharing the past must acknowledge oppression and injustice, as well as the ways we are positioned in relation to the past and to each other. The past contains the memories of what divided us and the potential to come together.

- *Supporting teachers.* Teachers cannot be expected to teach a difficult history they lived through without the space and support for self-reflection and processing of their experiences. It is dangerous to assume they leave their past behind when they enter the classroom or to take for granted that they have done the difficult work of facing a collective past and prejudices on their own.

- *Creating safe learning environments.* Sharing the past should not contribute to further oppression. Whether it is the teachers engaging with these difficult histories in workshops or the students in class, a thoughtful sequence of study that links history to human behaviour in the present is essential, as are methodologies that create safe and reflective learning environments.

c) Canada

- *Starting early.* The younger we start with GCED, the more certain our success.

- *Seeking truth.* Reconciliation is not possible without first courageously and openly seeking truth.

- *Individual truth.* Acknowledgement and recognition of each human being's truth is essential to the establishment of respectful relationship. This is particularly important when mainstream truth has been violent towards a group, such as Indigenous peoples.

- *Children as agents.* In matters of the heart and humanity, children are often the teachers of older generations and are most certainly the most courageous agents of social change.

- *From heart to head.* The journey from the heart to the head is a long one but is possible with genuine intention and commitment to humanity one person at a time.

d) Iraq

- *Technology.* VR and other digital pedagogies can heighten the experience of emotion which can build empathy and emotional awareness about histories of violence and atrocity crimes. Rather than depict scenes of violence that may be insensitive to the victims, or heighten feelings of anxiety and stress, VR allows the learner to concentrate on stories of individuals and expressions of culture while learning about genocidal acts. It creates an experience as a means and a valuable tool for spreading peace and strengthening social relations between groups, preventing the recurrence of atrocity crimes and building lasting and strong peace and harmony in society. VR's ability to evoke strong psychological (cognitive and emotional) reactions nevertheless necessitate a responsible and ethical approach in utilizing the technology.

- *Social and emotional learning.* Empathy and positive interaction enabled recognition of the issue at the local and international level about genocidal acts against the Yazidi community. The project highlighted the importance of thinking through the role of emotion in peace education, conflict transformation and the prevention of genocide, due to the primacy of emotional interaction and empathy over logical thinking. Empathy should be recognized as a feeling that is a precursor to any process of community reconciliation and social integration and the promotion of lasting peace.

6. Main recommendations

1. Cultivating a critical understanding

For GCED to foster reconciliation it must aim to bring about a change in attitudes, opinions, feelings and motives by applying transformative pedagogy as learner-centred, value-based and practice-oriented education on the cognitive, social and emotional and behavioural levels. Learners should be confronted with legacies of violence but also supported in cultivating a critical understanding of recent violent history, dialogue, cooperation and self-reflection. They further need to develop personal skills in non-violent interaction and communication to equip themselves to engage with the past and in peacebuilding communication and collaboration based on the acknowledgement of oppression and injustice. GCED can contribute to reconciliation at both the personal and collective level.

2. Understanding GCED in a relational way

Addressing individual and systemic tensions and exclusions is a central aspect of supporting processes of reconciliation and of moving from a unidirectional understanding of global educational ideas to a relational understanding. Reconciliation through GCED can be an ongoing and multi-stage process of negotiation that may reach no clear consensus but rather continually integrates differences into the process and persistently engages with various ways of 'knowing' and 'being'. The restoration of trust is at the core of reconciliation, and education plays a central role in this process.

3. Linking local and global GCED

Linking GCED to local contexts can mean starting from culturally specific concepts based on the values and ideas within GCED, such as 'solidarity', 'respect for diversity' and 'a shared sense of humanity'. Such links can run in both directions: on the one hand, global ideas may be implemented into local contexts according to local traditions, and on the other hand, local concepts, cultural knowledge and practices may be expanded to a global level or connected across contexts. Such links between the global and the local can enable comparative yet contextual approaches to reconciliation.

4. Reinvigorating oppressed or marginalized perspectives

In some countries, cultural sensitivity and inclusive education is required to address the needs of students from Indigenous populations and other ethnic, racial, religious and socio-economic minorities. In some places, the priority is to confront racist exclusion at both an individual and structural level. In other regions of the world, persisting internal tensions between national or political groups define the framework for all learning and must be considered when implementing GCED. This includes the critical questioning of ethnocentric structures and views.

5. Establishing sustainable structures

Programme development, implementation and evaluation of learning and teaching are fundamental for GCED in the process of reconciliation. Flexibility is required to create conditions that enable an effective and harmonious implementation of the relevant educational elements. In some cases, GCED may be integrated into specific school subjects, while other contexts may warrant adoption of a more comprehensive 'whole school' approach. Even where GCED is not explicitly mentioned, initiatives described as 'human rights education', 'citizenship education', 'education for intercultural understanding' or 'peace education' and 'dealing with violent pasts' often apply educational methods and tools conducive to GCED. GCED in the context of reconciliation aims to trigger shifts in behaviours and mindsets and to establish cultural, social and political institutions that can foster and defend peace.

6. Promoting GCED in non-favourable political contexts

In conflict and transitional contexts, where GCED might be inapplicable particularly in education settings that are lacking resources, infrastructure and the protection of human rights, the securing of material goods and safety is inextricably bound with educational initiatives for long-lasting peace. Democratic processes can be promoted in school governance that enables GCED in spite of a political context that does not allow an open debate on the subject.

7. Ensuring the quality of GCED

Teachers are fundamental and cannot be expected to teach a difficult history they themselves have lived through without support. They need the opportunity to acquire competencies and skills to teach GCED and support through teacher training and coaching to process their own traumas and come to terms with their own positioning when teaching about violent pasts. The appropriate pedagogical tools for instruction, such as teaching concepts, educational material and curricula as well as a safe learning environment, must be provided in such a way as to avoid contributing to further oppression.

7. Conclusion

Connecting theory to practice, we can see how reconciliation is a process, and GCED can contribute to it at both personal and collective levels. Whether by practicing citizenship and peacebuilding through the development of social and emotional skills (Colombia), confronting and learning from shared histories (South Africa), overcoming educational hierarchies together as teachers and learners (Canada) or engaging with digital pedagogies for peacebuilding (Iraq), the transformative pedagogy of GCED provides students with the knowledge, values, skills and critical reflection to build different futures from violent pasts. All four cases show how differential experiences of both students and teachers require careful treatment in order to confront injustice without deepening oppression or trauma, all while building capacity to create a more just society. Further, the examples show the need for comprehensive educational policies that address not only curriculum and pedagogy but also systemic support and teacher training. Reading these cases together in relation to the academic literature, we can see the need for sharing learning and experiences across reconciliation contexts and potentially creating transnational initiatives where applicable. As the Colombian initiative identifies, sharing successes and mistakes may contribute to the mutual learning and delicate work required for reconciliation education. Even where reconciliation may not be a national aim, it may be sought at a local level. It may also be a global pursuit, as ideological, political, economic and cultural divides intensify under the pressures of climate change, global economic systems and pandemics. Here, we see how GCED enables global vision of local issues – and vice versa – as we seek peace at various scales, often simultaneously.

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4 QUALITY EDUCATION

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