

Teacher Trainings and Peace Education at the University of Sarajevo

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Introduction and Background

Working at the University of Sarajevo's Peace Education Hub was a rewarding experience. My project focused on researching and compiling teacher training methods centered on intercultural learning, peacebuilding, and addressing the past. This work aimed to develop a comprehensive resource for teachers in the Western Balkans and beyond.

The project involved collaboration with local educators, students, and international organizations like UNICEF. By exploring global examples from countries such as the United States, South Africa, and the Western Balkans, and drawing on sources like the UNESCO Resource Manual, among others, I analyzed peacebuilding strategies and created presentations and bibliographies. These resources were shared with the Hub to support the development of a thorough teacher-training guide, providing a foundation for the Hub's ongoing work in peace education.



The Fourth Summer School of Peace Pedagogy run by The Peace Education Hub, in collaboration with ForumZFD in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Euroclio HIP BiH.

Methodology

Research involved reviewing teacher training programs and frameworks that promote peacebuilding, intercultural dialogue, and tolerance. This included guides, handbooks, modules, and case studies to identify best practices, with a focus on contextual adaptability and integrating frameworks into diverse educational settings.

Examples of works include:

- **Facing History & Ourselves (USA):** Emphasized historical understanding and ethical decisions for intercultural dialogue.
- **UNRWA (Middle East):** Focused on human rights, conflict resolution, and tolerance tailored to Palestinian refugee contexts.
- **Council of Europe's Pestalozzi Programme (Europe):** Provided modules on intercultural competence, democratic citizenship, and human rights.
- **UNESCO's Associated Schools Network (Global):** Promoted sustainable development through arts and transformative education.
- **Forum ZFD and Youth for Peace (Balkans):** Addressed ethnic segregation and promoted conflict transformation through teacher training.
- **Education for Peace (EFP) Program (Bosnia-Herzegovina):** Integrated peace education into curricula, focusing on conflict resolution and community service.
- **Transformative Pedagogy (Africa):** Enhanced teachers' capacity for peacebuilding, particularly in regions of conflict like the Horn of Africa.

Analysis and Conclusion

The review of teacher training programs in peacebuilding, intercultural dialogue, and conflict resolution highlights several key themes. Successful initiatives, like UNRWA and Forum ZFD, prioritize adapting content to local histories and cultural contexts, ensuring resources are tailored to address specific community challenges. Programs such as UNESCO's ASPnet and Facing History & Ourselves integrate the arts, historical reflection, and ethical decision-making, fostering empathy, critical thinking, and inclusive classroom dynamics.

Additionally, continuous professional development is emphasized in programs like UNESCO IICBA and Education for Peace, which focus on equipping educators to navigate sensitive topics. Empowering teachers as agents of change, these frameworks aim to create more inclusive and peaceful school communities, enhancing social cohesion and resilience through flexible, comprehensive training models.

The Peace Education Hub can utilize these models to strengthen its own teacher training resources, adapting them to local needs while fostering peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue in the Western Balkans and beyond. As the Hub continues their work in forming a comprehensive teacher training guide, my research will be used as a baseline.

Community Engagement and Research Experience

Immersing myself in the local culture through community interactions deepened my understanding of a society still recovering from war. This experience taught me valuable lessons in leadership, cultural sensitivity, active listening, and adaptability in a post-conflict setting. Living with a host family further challenged my preconceptions and improved my ability to navigate unfamiliar environments. Despite the language barrier, we found ways to communicate, which strengthened my appreciation for perseverance.

The Laidlaw Scholars Program helped me develop key leadership skills, including teamwork, communication, and persistence, while deepening my understanding of peace education in post-conflict societies. Collaborating with the staff at the University of Sarajevo enriched my ability to analyze information from diverse perspectives.

Acknowledgements

As I shape my career, I aim to use my research and leadership skills to foster collaboration. I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to work with the faculty and students at the Peace Education Hub and Laidlaw. Thank you for the support and guidance of:

- The Laidlaw Foundation
- The University of Sarajevo Peace Education Hub
- Larisa Kasumagić Kafedžić
- Lejla Mulalic
- The Mujić Family
- Aleks Vladicic