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## Znaczenie pielęgnowania pokoju w edukacji przez nauczanie praw człowieka uczniów szkół średnich

### **The importance of cultivating peace in education by teaching human rights to pre-university students**

**STRESZCZENIE:** Artykuł skupia się na znaczeniu pielęgnowania pokoju w edukacji przez nauczanie praw człowieka uczniów szkół średnich. Analizuje pozytywny wpływ, dzięki któremu pedagogika pokoju może być zintegrowana z programami nauczania mającymi na celu wprowadzenie pokoju przez poznanie praw człowieka, wartości i umiejętności. Różne dokumenty prawne z naciskiem na edukację nakreślają ideę, że edukacja młodych ludzi w zakresie praw człowieka jest korzyścią zarówno dla jednostek, jak i społeczeństwa. Program nauczania powinien zatem być zorientowany na nauczanie praw, jako skuteczny sposób zaszczepienia koncepcji pokoju i niestosowania przemocy we wszystkich obszarach przedmiotowych i środowiskach uczenia się. Cztery filary uczenia się UNESCO obejmują między innymi uczenie się życia razem, co jest podstawą rozwoju zrozumienia, rozważania i szacunku dla innych. Jest to podstawą pokojowego współistnienia. Z tego powodu rządy różnych krajów włączyły edukację o prawach człowieka do swoich krajowych programów nauczania. Nawet w Albanii nastąpiła skromna interwencja w program nauczania, ale nadal istnieje potrzeba dalszej interwencji w programy nauczania, wciąż bowiem jest wiele do zrobienia. Aby ustalić, jak jest realizowane nauczanie praw człowieka

w albańskich szkołach, przeanalizowaliśmy programy nauczania szkół średnich. Ustaliliśmy, że nauczanie praw człowieka pozostawiono jedynie przedmiotom nieobowiązkowym, takim jak wychowanie obywatelskie i inne. Uważamy, że nie jest to wystarczające. Program nauczania powinien zatem być zmodyfikowany w taki sposób, aby nauczanie praw człowieka było włączone do przedmiotów podstawowych, aby uwzględnić nauczanie o pokoju w całym programie nauczania. Nauczyciele muszą także posiadać odpowiednie kompetencje, umiejętności i wiedzę, aby zintegrować nauczanie praw człowieka niezależnie od przedmiotu, którego uczą, po to, aby pielęgnować pokój w swoich społecznościach. Ponadto, rząd Albanii powinien dostosować ustawodawstwo tak, aby zapewnić nauczanie w szkołach praw człowieka i praw dziecka. Głęboko wierzymy, że opracowując programy nauczania i plany lekcji z wykorzystaniem podejścia pedagogiki pokoju, przyczynimy się do kształtowania obywateli do życia w pokoju.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** pedagogika pokoju, prawa człowieka, edukacja

**ABSTRACT:** The article focuses on the importance of cultivating peace through education by teaching human rights to pre-university students. It analyses the positive impact through which peace pedagogy can be integrated across curricula aiming at inducing peace through learning about human rights, values and skills. Various legal documents with an emphasis on education outline the idea that educating young people on human rights is a benefit for both individuals and society. The curriculum should therefore be oriented towards the teaching of rights, as an effective way of instilling the concept of peace and nonviolence into all subject areas and learning environments. UNESCO's four pillars of learning include, among others, learning to live together, which is central to the development of understanding, consideration, and respect for others. It serves as the basis for ongoing peaceful coexistence. For this reason, governments of different countries have included human rights education in their national curricula. Even in Albania there has been a modest intervention in the curriculum, but there is still much room for improvement. In order to research the space given to teaching human rights in Albanian schools, we have analysed pre-university curricula. We saw that the teaching of human rights is only left to non-core subjects, such as Citizenship etc., but that is by no means enough. The curriculum should therefore, be adapted in such a way that the teaching of human rights is integrated into the core subjects, considering peace education teaching approach for the whole curriculum. Teachers, on the other hand, need to have the right competencies, skills and knowledge to integrate the teaching of

human rights regardless of the subject they teach, in order to cultivate peace in their learning communities. Moreover, the Albanian government should adapt the legislation to ensure that schools teach about human and children's rights. We strongly believe that, by developing curricula and lesson plans using peace pedagogy we would contribute to building nonviolent citizens of tomorrow.

**KEYWORDS:** peace pedagogy, human rights, education

## Introduction

Since World War II, nations have seen education as a means towards world peace. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has envisaged the path towards the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as an objective of education. Article 26 of the Declaration emphasizes that education is the promoter of understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and serves to maintain peace.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was a legally non-binding document in international terms, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights established legal obligations for member states, specifically the right to education in Articles 13 and 14 thereof. Article 13 of the International Covenant can be considered the most important formulation of the right to education in an international agreement. It is the first paragraph of article 13 which expresses the objective of education: "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or

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<sup>1</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26. 1948, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>, [dostęp: 04.04.2021].

religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace”.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the purpose of education is embodied in article 29 of the Convention on the rights of the Child. Education shall be directed toward preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of education reflects the belief that education is an invaluable asset of fundamental importance to human life. It is much more than learning to read, write and calculate. Education is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace. According to UNICEF<sup>4</sup>, education can play a crucial role in peacebuilding processes and can help to prevent conflict and contribute to long-term peace. From the introduction of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, schools have been seen as a context for the transmission of human rights. In order for these internationally recognised goals to become part of education, they must be broken down into implementing mechanisms in various state policies. According to Bodet<sup>5</sup> (Former Director-General, at UNESCO, “knowledge and understanding of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and their practical application must begin during childhood”. Human rights education is a multi-faced process which requires a multidimensional approach to providing peaceful education. McLeod<sup>6</sup> stressed the importance of teaching human rights across the curriculum. According to this researcher, “peaceful learning is about growing the knowledge, values and skills

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<sup>2</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 13, para.1. (1966), <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx> [dostę: 28.03.2021].

<sup>3</sup> Convention on the rights of the Child, Article 29, <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text> [dostę: 20.03.2021].

<sup>4</sup> UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Machel Study 10-Year Strategic Review: Children and Conflict in a Changing World. 2009, New York, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4a389ca92.html> [dostę: 10.04.2021].

<sup>5</sup> J.T. Bordet, (UNESCO), *Human rights issue*, <https://en.unesco.org/courier/december-1951>, [dostę: 14.04.2021].

<sup>6</sup> J. McLeod, *A peaceful pedagogy: Teaching human rights across the curriculum*, “Social and Behavioural Sciences” 2014, s. 1225-1232.

that enable learners to engage in socially just action based on human rights”.

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child developed a model of a human rights curriculum, where the transmission of content and knowledge of human rights, can be done through learning about human rights, values and skills that enable peace. Article 29 of the UNCRC<sup>7</sup> sets out that the minimum offer of education should be designed to provide children with life skills, strengthen their capacity to enjoy the full range of human rights and promote a culture which respects, protects and promotes the value of human rights. The idea is to offer rights based education which includes not only the content of the curriculum but also the educational processes, the teaching methods and the environment where education takes place.

This panorama in the international framework will serve as a model for embracing the realization of human rights education in the Albanian context. Peace education becomes even more meaningful in a country like Albania, which comes from a communist past, where human rights were non-existent.

## Methodology

The study uses qualitative methods. It describes the importance of cultivating peace in education by teaching human rights to pre-university students, relying on various studies in the field. It also describes the positive impact through which peace pedagogy can be integrated across curricula aiming at inducing peace through learning about human rights, values and skills, especially in the Albanian context. The authors have also conducted an analysis of the Albanian pre-university curricula, in order to investigate the space given to teaching human rights in Albanian schools.

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<sup>7</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 1 – Article 29(1): The Aims of Education. 2001, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation> [dostęp: 1.04.2021].

## Human rights education through peace pedagogy

The Declaration of Human Rights serves as a strong foundation for building a world where all people are provided with a peaceful and dignified life. Meanwhile, the Convention on the Rights of the Child underlines that respect for human rights begins precisely with the way a society treats children. Living in peace is a right that every child should enjoy, thereby being able to realize their full potential. A very powerful tool on the basis of which peace is built (and achieved) is education. Education itself is a right that provides a starting point to the enjoyment of all human rights, by also including human rights education.

Within the education system, human rights education promotes a holistic, rights-based approach that includes both “human rights through education”, ensuring that all the components and processes of education – including curricula, materials, methods and training – are conducive to learning about human rights, and “human rights in education”, ensuring that the human rights of all members of the school community are respected.<sup>8</sup>

Various international legal documents with an emphasis on education outline the idea that educating young people on human rights is a benefit for both individuals and society. This can be achieved through peace pedagogy, that is an approach founded on students’ learning about and through human rights by growing the knowledge, values and skills of peace in their school environment to enable them to enact human rights in their world.<sup>9</sup> Researchers Ian Harris and John Synott<sup>10</sup> have described peace education pedagogy as a series of “teaching encounters” that draw from people their desire for peace, nonviolent alternatives for managing conflict, and skills

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<sup>8</sup> OHCHR, Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice. 2009, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/CompendiumHRE.pdf> [dostęp: 28.03.2021].

<sup>9</sup> J. McLeod, op. cit., s. 1225-1232.

<sup>10</sup> I. Harris, J. Synott, *Peace Education for a New Century*, “Social Alternatives” 2002, t. 21(1), s. 3-6.

for critical analysis of structural arrangements that produce and legitimize injustice and inequality.

Human rights education should begin in early childhood. For former communist countries such as Albania, with a savage dictatorial regime, where the violation of freedom and human rights was natural, this approach to teaching is imperative, not only for learning human rights, but also for understanding the importance that the teaching of these rights has for collective and personal peacebuilding.

Consequently, teaching in Albania should be more open to the approaches of transformative pedagogy, using them as a basis for peacebuilding. Given that in this kind of pedagogical approach, the learner is at the centre of teaching, they should be aware, critical and responsive to the world of learning beyond school walls, including informal and non-formal education.

### **The importance of integrating human rights education in the pre-university curricula**

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, schools have been recognized as the best places for the transmission of human rights. It is also emphasized that knowledge and understanding of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and their practical application must begin during childhood. On this basis, the curricula should therefore be oriented towards the teaching of human rights, to empower youth with peacebuilding knowledge, skills and competencies.

Educational systems of this century have increased the range of skills a student must possess. These skills relate not only to the acquisition of knowledge, but also to the development of some important competencies. Looking at these skills inward, researchers have divided them into the following four categories related to: 1. *ways of thinking*, related to creativity/innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making, and learning to learn; 2. *ways of working* related to communication and teamwork; 3. *tools for working* related to general knowledge and information communications technology literacy, and 4. *living in the world* related to citizenship, life and career and personal and social responsibility, including cultural awareness

and competence.<sup>11</sup> Taking into consideration these four categories, researchers emphasize that the skills a student must develop are: critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, citizenship and character education, often called the 6 C-s of education.<sup>12</sup>

Constant reforms in the Albanian education system and the new curriculum that is being implemented have put emphasis on competency-based learning, aiming also at educating students to equip them with contemporary democratic values for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In this context, these students are expected to be respectful towards human rights, sensitive towards the environment in which they live, thinking critically, creative, making the right decisions, having developed social participation skills, adopting social scientists' scientific methods of creating knowledge, active and productive in social life and equipped with a knowledge of their own rights and responsibilities.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, placing human and children's rights at the basis of the curriculum will create a starting point from where every commitment we make towards the student should begin. Not only should the curriculum be reformed by introducing human rights, but the teaching of these rights should be made compulsory. This will accomplish the mission: through teaching about human rights we cultivate peace in our students' hearts.

## Analysis of pre-university curriculum in Albania

Pre-university education in Albania is in the process of reform which includes the entire education system, curriculum documentation, organization and assessment of learning, reform of initial training systems, qualification and professional development of human resources at work, even the physical infrastructure of educational institutions. An important element of this process is the curriculum reform.

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<sup>11</sup> P. Griffin, B. McGaw, E. Care (Eds.), *Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills*, Springer International Publishing 2018, s. 17-19.

<sup>12</sup> M. Fullan, G. Scott, *New Pedagogies for Deep Learning Whitepaper: Education PLUS. Collaborative Impact SPC*, Seattle 2014, s. 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> M. Sounoglou, M. Michalopoulou, *Early Childhood Education Curricula: Human Rights and Citizenship in Early Childhood Education*, "Journal of Education and Learning", t. 6, nr 2, s. 53.



In the past, the curriculum has been organized into special subject programs, putting emphasis on the theoretical formation more than on the practical formation of the student. Moreover, part of the curriculum was overloaded and inappropriate for students' capacities. The degree of integration was also low, consequently the students failed to solve problems in complex situations.

Since 2014 our schools have been applying competency-based learning.<sup>14</sup> The curriculum now is understood as a system composed of several elements with educational goals which must be interrelated to each other, in order to enable the education system to be oriented and function through educational and administrative plans. Apart from displaying the historical, social, linguistic, political, religious, geographical and cultural realities of a country, the curriculum must provide quality and equal education for every member of society, regardless of ethnicity, sex, social status, and other differences.<sup>15</sup> The curriculum, among other things, defines what students should know and what they should be able to do properly, what values and attitudes should be cultivated, how they should be trained for coexistence and tolerance, how they can actively contribute to their social and personal well-being etc.

The reform aims at developing key European competences so that students are able to solve complex problems of today's life both at personal level and at the national and global level. However, although major changes have been made to the education system, European standards have not yet been reached and many problems have not been overcome. There is still much work to be done regarding education. According to data from the World Bank Group on the education system in Albania and its performance<sup>16</sup> there are several factors that hinder the development of education, which are mostly related to the lack of an education system that provides decent capacity to deal with future challenges and to become active, competitive, responsible and caring citizens.

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<sup>14</sup> B. Saliانji, *Mësimdhënia dhe të nxëniet bazuar në kompetenca*, Tirana 2017, s. 7

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Education and Sport, *The curriculum framework for pre-university education of the Republic of Albania 2014*, s. 9, <https://www.ascap.edu.al/korniza-kurrikulare> [dostęp: 03.03.2021].

<sup>16</sup> World Bank Group, *Quality of Education and Opportunities for Skills Development in Albania 2014*, s. 6-8, file:///C:/Users/CRS/Downloads/al-pisa-report-al.pdf [dostęp: 15.04.2021].

One of these shortcomings is related to the lack of human rights education. Although a curriculum intervention has been made, it still remains modest, as it still needs improvement. From our analysis of the pre-university curriculum we found that the teaching of human rights is only left to non-core subjects, such as Citizenship etc. There is no human rights education integrated in core subjects.

However, curricular changes in favour of teaching must also be supported by concrete actions by the state, which must guarantee the students' right to quality education and support a curriculum that is built on the basis of human rights.

There are several factors that hinder human rights education and are mostly related to the lack of capacity of a state to adopt policies to improve curricula, or to engage in concrete actions at the national and school level. Also, the lack of appropriate investments in education, as well as the lack of teaching capacity to develop learning according to the approaches of transformative pedagogy not only hinders the learning of human rights by students, but directly affect learning in general.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Beyond educating students across important academic domains, schools should also promote equality, dignity and respect in one's community, society and worldwide. Through human rights education we can thus empower our students to develop the skills and attitudes that promote and contribute to peacebuilding. This is imperative, especially for the Albanian education system, aiming at transforming the whole pre-university curriculum according to the demands of modern education, where the learner is in the centre and the pedagogies used are those that enable learners to be, among others, decent citizens.

Therefore, we recommend:

Adaptation of the pre-university curriculum according to the peace pedagogy approach. The teaching of human rights should not only be left to non-core subjects, but it should be also be integrated into core subjects. Also, the adaptation of the curriculum should be accompanied by the implementation of different (national and school) projects with

the participation of student, aiming at strengthening their human rights knowledge.

Teachers, need to have the right competencies, skills and knowledge to integrate the teaching of human rights regardless of the subject they teach, in order to cultivate peace in their learning communities. Therefore, teacher training is essential for the whole process.

It is not enough for the inclusion of human rights in education to be done in the formal aspect but it requires a greater awareness of schools, teachers and other actors, to become an active part of the activities of the teaching and educational process.

To make this possible, it is necessary to fully understand and realize human rights education through practical implementation in everyday school life. The Ministry of Education, and other bodies related to education, should support teacher training on human rights education. Moreover, peace education seminars involving teachers and principals will create the basis for a peaceful mindset in the minds of all stakeholders of Albanian schools.

The Albanian government should adapt the legislation to ensure that schools teach human rights.

We strongly believe that, by developing curricula and lesson plans using the peace pedagogy approach, we contribute to a better world.