Challenging the War System: Skills for peacebuilding

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What is War?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "war" as: (1) A state of armed conflict between different countries or different groups within a country; (2) a state of competition or hostility between different people or groups, or (3) a sustained campaign against an undesirable situation or activity.

"Whether we like it or not, wars will continue to happen in the future."

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

Mankind has waged war for centuries, therefore, whether we like it or not, wars will continue to happen in the future.

We need to challenge this belief because it can be used to justify the use of violence and war as a means to respond to conflicts.

If violence and war are deemed inevitable or unavoidable, then people will likely be discouraged to seek their end.

Many believe that war is inevitable because violence is inherent (or inborn) in our human nature. But is war really inherent in us?

The Seville Statement on Violence

Main Points

1. It is scientifically incorrect to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors. Very few species fight among themselves and none use weapons. Warfare is a human invention.

2. It is scientifically incorrect to say that human genes produce violent behavior. They provide the potential for behavior but how a person actually acts depends on how s/he was raised.

3. It is scientifically incorrect to say that humans have a violent brain. We have the potential to act violently, but whether we do or not is shaped by how we were socialized or brought up.

4. It is scientifically incorrect to say that war is caused by instinct. Violent behaviors associated with war are not in-born but something humans have learned.

   (Statement was drafted by an international committee of scholars who met at the University of Seville in 1986 to address the issue of aggression. UNESCO and other scientific organization have endorsed the Statement.)

Although war and militarism may at first appear as innate human characteristics,
they are in fact social creations, intended as methods to achieve social, economic or political goals.

In our world today,

going to war is glorified as something that is noble and war movies are glamorized.

But what is the true face of war?

(Web chart activity: Images & Feelings evoked by war)

The True Face of War

War dehumanizes us and the "enemy"

It sets us into "enemy thinking"

Our differences with the outgroups are exaggerated allowing prejudice, xenophobia and scapegoating

Real or invented threats make us willing to sacrifice everything in war, even to the extent of committing genocide and "ethnic cleansing"

Violence is

* not inherent in human beings
* is learned behavior
* seen on TV
* expressed in Toys, TV games
* observed in other human behavior-
  adults

Deaths and suffering caused by war are appalling

- More than 90% of all casualties are civilians
  Millions are displaced (refugees)
  Women's numbers are higher as refugees and as victims of war crimes (IWT in Japan)
  Children cannot live normal lives and, worse, are recruited as child soldiers

Wars also destroy the natural environment

What is happening now?

There are at least 22 wars and armed conflicts actively going on all around the world — even if you're only hearing about a few of them on the news.

What are they fighting for?

. Every day,

people are fighting to the death for the ideals they believe in.
   (Terrorist Insurgency)

Some are fighting for independence and freedom. (Civil War)

Some are dying for their right to be heard, to be treated as human beings.

Others are

desperately attempting to gain control of resources, roads and riches, and they're willing to wield death in order to get them.(Drug War)

Some even say they're ultimately fighting in the name of peace.

The 2022
Russia/Ukraine conflict
Type: Invasion? Peacekeeping mission?

Afghanistan
Type: Civil War/Terrorist Insurgency

Ethiopia [also involved: Eritrea]
Type: Civil War

Mexico
Type: Drug War

Yemen [also involved: Saudi Arabia]
Type: Civil War

Country	Type of conflict
Algeria	Terrorist insurgency
Burkina Faso	Terrorist insurgency
Cameroon	Terrorist insurgency
Chad	Terrorist insurgency
Colombia	Drug war & civil war
DR Congo	Terrorist insurgency
Iraq	Terrorist insurgency & political unrest
Libya	Civil war & terrorist insurgency
Mali	Civil war & terrorist insurgency
Mozambique	Terrorist insurgency
Myanmar	Civil war
Niger	Terrorist insurgency
Nigeria	Terrorist insurgency
South Sudan	Ethnic violence
Syria	Civil war
Tanzania	Terrorist insurgency
Tunisia	Terrorist insurgency

We can choose

to have war, but we can also choose to have dialogue and transform structures without violence.

We can dismantle the structure of the society we live in to make it a safe and secure place where we can enjoy peace and adequate standards of living.

What can we do to challenge the war system?

Re-examine our own mindsets about war and violence: do we believe that war cannot be avoided?

Raise awareness on the need for an expanded social identification, i.e., our identity as a member of the human/global community

Raise critical consciousness re the costs of war – human, material, ecological

Assist others/groups in their ethical consideration on the issue

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Campaign against war toys and violence-oriented media

Support alternatives to military training in schools: e.g., community service

Encourage political advocacy against war and support nonviolent conflict resolution alternatives, e.g. negotiation, mediation
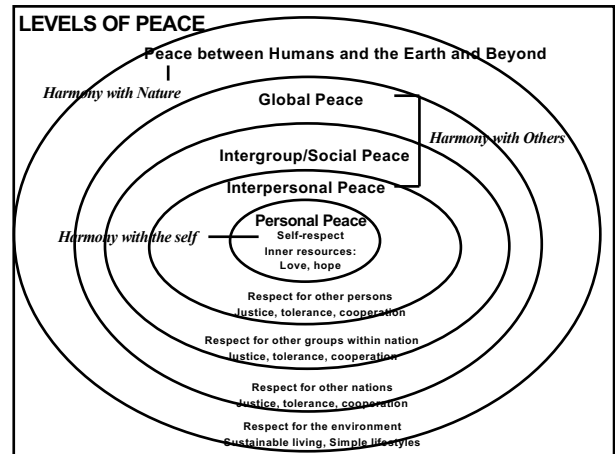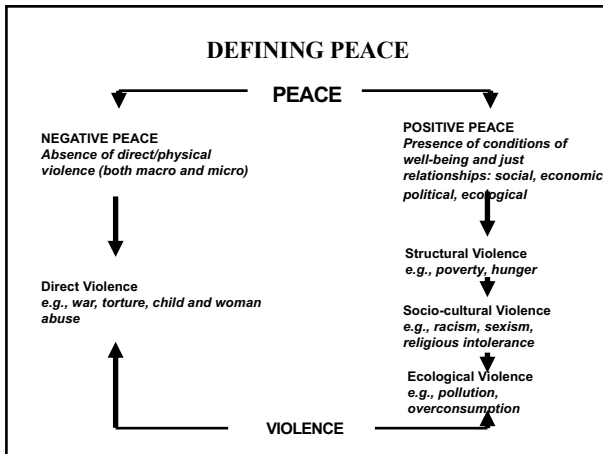
Engage in training, writing, lobbying

The increasing destructiveness of war has revealed the cause of abolishing war to be more of a practical necessity than a utopian idea…The institution of war is a product of human imagination and the human imagination can replace it.

- Betty Reardon

If the world can end apartheid, then it can end war.

-Desmond Tutu

DEFINING PEACE

PEACE

NEGATIVE PEACE
Absence of direct/physical violence (both macro and micro)

POSITIVE PEACE
Presence of conditions of well-being and just relationships: social, economic, political, ecological

Direct Violence
e.g., war, torture, child and woman abuse

Structural Violence
e.g., poverty, hunger

Socio-cultural Violence
e.g., racism, sexism, religious intolerance

Ecological Violence
e.g., pollution, overconsumption

VIOLENCE

LEVELS OF PEACE

Harmony with Nature

Peace between Humans and the Earth and Beyond

Global Peace

Harmony with Others

Intergroup/Social Peace

Interpersonal Peace

Harmony with the self

Personal Peace
Self-respect
Inner resources:
Love, hope

Respect for other persons
Justice, tolerance, cooperation

Respect for other groups within nation
Justice, tolerance, cooperation

Respect for other nations
Justice, tolerance, cooperation

Respect for the environment
Sustainable living, Simple lifestyles

What would be the alternative to war?

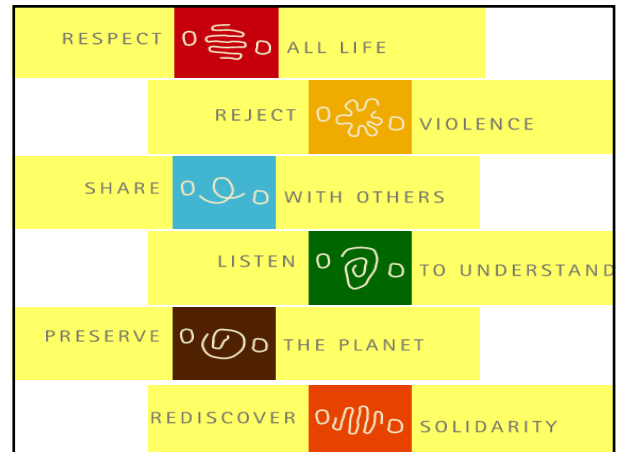## How can we achieve a culture of peace?

The United Nations defines the Culture of Peace as

"a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life

that reject violence and prevent conflicts

by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations." (UN Resolutions A/RES/52/13: Culture of Peace and A/RES/53/243, Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace)

In this world,
where violence still prevails,
there is a need
for education that
teaches the citizens of the world
to achieve a culture of peace.

A culture of peace

will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems

have the skills to resolve conflict constructively

know and live by international standards of human rights, gender and racial equality

appreciate cultural diversity

respect the integrity of the Earth

(The Hague Appeal for Peace Global Campaign for Peace Education Campaign Statement)

"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"

unesco

RESPECT — ALL LIFE
REJECT — VIOLENCE
SHARE — WITH OTHERS
LISTEN — TO UNDERSTAND
PRESERVE — THE PLANET
REDISCOVER — SOLIDARITY

6 Principles of Peace Education
Six themes of the holistic EIU (Education for International Understanding) for a Culture of Peace

Living with justice and compassion

Human rights & responsibility

Environmental care

Educating for

Inter-cultural solidarity

Dismantling a culture of war

Personal peace

V. Cawagas & S.H. Toh

Transforming Our World- the 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development

"governance systems help advance development and peace especially when they are inclusive, participatory and accountable."

REIMAGINING OUR FUTURES TOGETHER

A new social contract f o r education

REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURES OF EDUCATION

Reardon (2001) suggested that:

Building a culture of peace depends very much on education, because education in our contemporary world is the main carrier of culture. Only education can enable societies to understand the culture of violence which has blighted our past, debases our present and threatens our future. It is through education that the peoples of the world will be able to derive and prepare to pursue the vision of a culture of peace (49-50).

Reardon, B. A. (2001). *Education for a culture of peace in a gender perspective*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

"Whether we like it or not, wars will continue to happen in the future."

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

We can disagree
if we develop the skills for peacebuilding and
if we work together for peace toward our common future