

Reconciliation through UNESCO Chair for Preventing the Genocide in the Islamic World

14 August, 2021

Executive Summary

Transitioning from a past characterized by violence to a more equitable, peaceful and stable society is a difficult and complex process in which education can play a key role. While ending conflict is part of peace-building, so is confronting the legacies of violent histories, changing mindsets and behaviours, and establishing institutions, systems, structures and cultures that can sustain peace. Learning to live together in the aftermath of violent or unjust 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 report explores how University of Baghdad contributes to long-lasting peace-building in reconciliation contexts, fostering collective responsibility and action to one another and to the land. In providing both an academic review and key learning from the application university of Baghdad activity to concrete reconciliation contexts, this report speaks directly to policy makers concerned with reconciliation education within their own divided societies.



A Shared Vision for Preventing of Genocide in the Islamic World

Learning from Practice: Three Educational Initiatives in Iraq

Introduction

Conclusion

Connecting theory to practice, we can see how reconciliation is a process, and GCED can contribute to the process at both personal and collective levels. Whether by practicing citizenship and peacebuilding through the development of socio-emotional skills (Colombia), confronting and learning from shared histories (South Africa) or overcoming educational hierarchies to act on reconciliation together as teachers and learners (Canada), the transformative pedagogy of GCED provides students with the knowledge, values, skills and critical reflection to build different futures from violent pasts. While each initiative evidences how specific contexts shape the particular nature of GCED for reconciliation, they also present key learnings that could be drawn into other contexts. All three 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 three examples show the need for comprehensive educational policies that address not only curriculum and pedagogy but also systemic support and teacher training. A comprehensive approach helps to address the complex of theoretical, cognitive, experiential, emotional and social components of reconciliation education via

GCED.

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 for reconciliation where applicable. As the Colombian initiative identifies, sharing not only successes but also mistakes may contribute to the mutual learning and delicate work required for reconciliation education. Further, there is no place that is immune from the work of reconciliation and peace building. 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 heating, global economic systems and pandemic life. Here, we see how GCED enables global vision of local issues – and vice versa – as we seek peace at various scales, often simultaneously.

5. References