



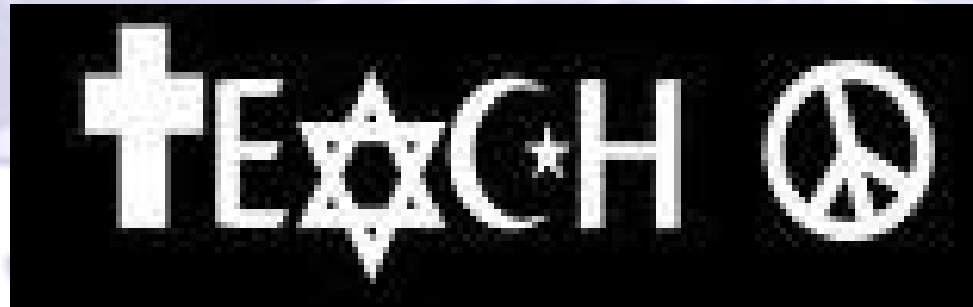
Teachers are the key for promoting peace& harmony in Pakistan

By
Mrs Abaida Mahmood
Qurban & Surraya Educational Trust
Lahore
Pakistan

What is Peace?

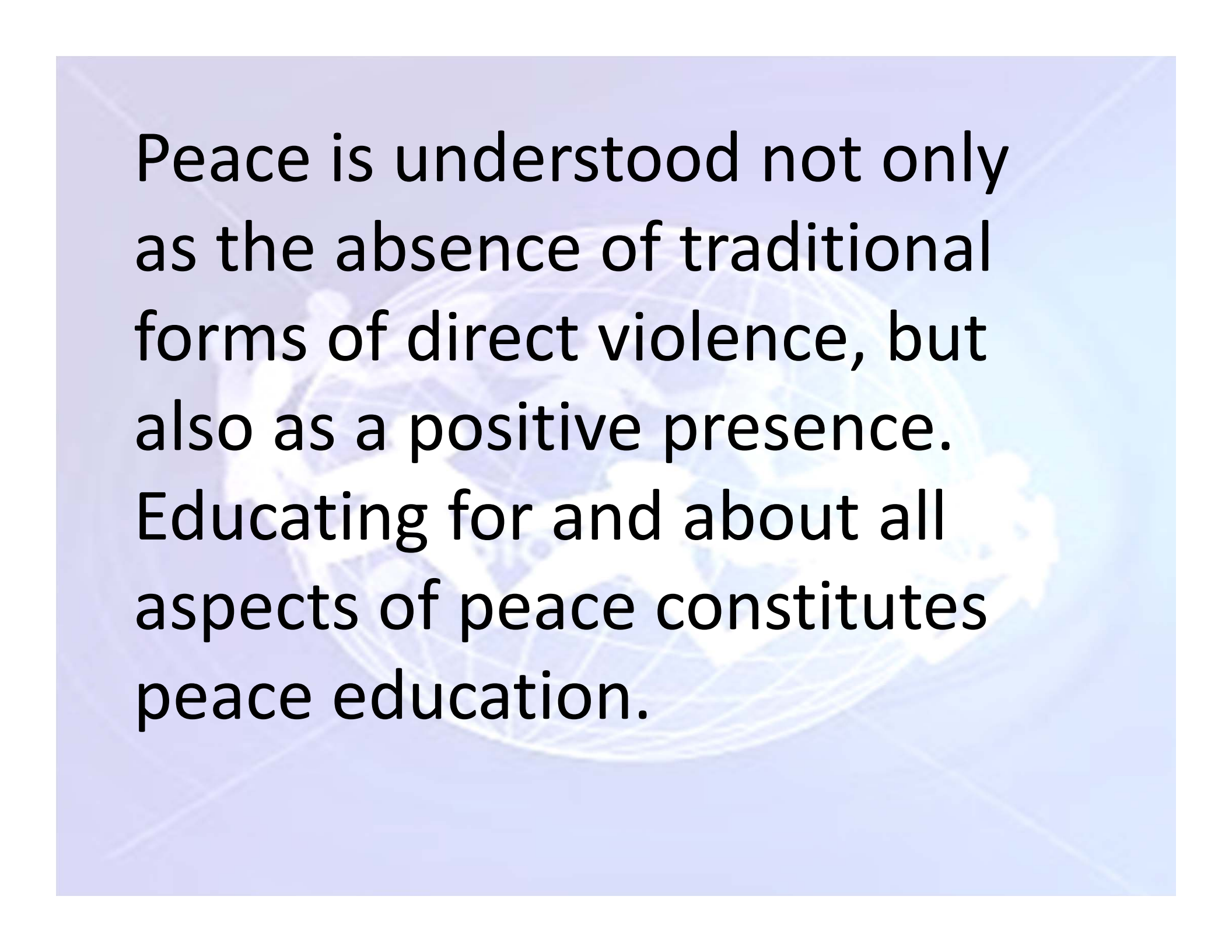
Wikipedia defines Peace as a state of harmony characterized by the lack of violent conflict and the freedom from fear of violence. Commonly understood as the absence of hostility, peace also suggests the existence of healthy or newly healed relationships, prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, the establishment of equality, and a working political order that serves the true interests of all.

To Reach Peace



Peace education is a participatory holistic process that includes teaching for and about democracy and human rights, nonviolence, social and economic justice, gender equality, environmental sustainability, disarmament, traditional peace practices, international law, and human security (Hague Appeal for Peace Global Campaign for Peace Education).

Hague Appeal for Peace Global Campaign for Peace Education pointed out that; "A culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems, have the skills to resolve conflicts and struggle for justice non-violently, live by international standards of human rights and equity, appreciate cultural diversity, and respect the Earth and each other. Such learning can only be achieved with systematic education for peace".

The background of the slide features a light blue gradient with a faint, glowing globe in the center. Two hands are shown holding the globe from the sides, symbolizing global unity and care. The text is overlaid on this background in a large, black, sans-serif font.

Peace is understood not only as the absence of traditional forms of direct violence, but also as a positive presence. Educating for and about all aspects of peace constitutes peace education.

“In the classroom, peace education aims to develop skills, attitudes and knowledge with co-operative and participatory learning methods and an environment of tolerance, care and respect. Through dialogue and exploration, teachers and students engage in a journey of shared learning. Students are nurtured and empowered to take responsibility for their own growth and achievement while teachers take care of the well-being of all students. The practice of peace education is an opportunity to promote the total welfare of students, advocate for their just and equitable treatment of youth and promote individual and social responsibility for both educators and learners. Through pedagogy and social action, peace educators demonstrate that there are alternatives to violence.”

(UNESCO Culture of Peace Global Educators)

Peace shattered in the name of religion

Islam, no doubt is one of the world's greatest religions. Islam has brought comfort and peace of mind to countless millions of men and women. It has given dignity and meaning to impoverished lives. It has taught people of different races to live in brotherhood and people of different creeds to live side by side in reasonable tolerance. It inspired a great civilization in which others besides Muslims lived creative and useful lives and which, by its achievement, enriched the whole world.

Unfortunately the greatest damage to our homeland (Pakistan) has been done in the name of religion. Certain religious groups have never missed any opportunity to harm our national interests.

The Present Situation

Malala Yusafzai, a 14 year old peace activist and winner of prestigious civil award Tamga e Shujaat and national peace award, was recently shot in the head by extremist groups. The young girl played a key role for promotion of girls' education and peace in Swat valley and is considered a role model for girls. Malala Yusafzai is the identity of Pakistan and an inspiration for us all.

The Present Situation

Research and reports show that many textbooks for different classes have content advocating intolerance and there has been a 'marked increase' in hate content in the curricula of classes in the recent years.

We display provocative advertisement on the back of rickshaws and other vehicles which spread messages of hate, we can use these mediums to spread messages of peace, unity and brotherhood among people to defeat the aims of anti-state elements.

The hate content in school syllabi, the messages that we display speak volume of an intolerant society. The Sectarian and religious discrimination should be recognised as 'vulgar' and discouraged.



Promoting Peace through Education

Peace education includes the cultivation of peace building skills (e.g. dialogue, mediation, artistic endeavours). Peace educators, then, teach the values of respect, understanding, and nonviolence, present skills for analyzing international conflict, educate for alternative security systems, and use a pedagogy that is democratic and participatory. Thus, peace education as a practice and philosophy refers to matching complementary elements between education and society, where the social purposes (i.e. why teach), content (i.e. what to teach), and pedagogy (i.e. how to teach) of the educative process are conducive to fostering peace. Accordingly, peace education is a dialogical experience conducted through participatory learning, where learners communally and cooperatively grapple with contemporary issues (i.e. talking points) related to local and global contexts. (Kevin Kester)

Promoting Peace through Education

We at Qurban & Surraya Educational Trust view tolerance as a way of thinking and feeling — but most importantly, of acting — that gives us peace in our individuality, respect for those unlike us, the wisdom to discern humane values and the courage to act upon them. We believe that tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. Tolerance is harmony in difference.

We believe that Peace is not only the absence of war or violent conflict, but also the presence of positive and respectful cultural and relationships. It is not about my way or your way, it is about a higher way. It is not just about tolerating differences but about celebrating differences.

Objectives of Peace Education at Qurban & Surraya Educational Trust:

- To conceptualize components of peace.
- To recognize how each person and each cultural group interrelates in the local and global socio-cultural system.
- To analyze, evaluate, create models/ paradigms for a better future.
- To express one's reasoning and genuine feelings when making judgements about local and global problems.
- To relate one's decision effectively to those of the group to which one belongs.
- To commit oneself to participate effectively and responsibly in local, national and global programs for promoting and practicing peace.

How Peace Education is taught at Qurban & Surraya Educational Trust

Class room Activities

Peace education is taught through various activities in schools, such as:
Peace lesson plans, Communication between children of various groups/cultures/
countries through the exchange of letters, the exchange of work and
student/faculty exchange

School-based activities involving parents, teachers and students(e.g., peace walk,
Peace education orientation seminars and forums)

Volunteering to aid another country's citizens who are in difficulty
Games and ways of developing group awareness to overcome prejudices and
stereotypes

Peace Education Outside School

Peace education beyond the schoolroom is promoted through:
Community outreach programs for the less fortunate
Activities through various social and international organizations (or institutions)
UNESCO, UNICEF etc.

How Peace Education is taught at Qurban & Surraya Educational Trust

Holding assemblies:


Assemblies build a sense of community and afford pupils an opportunity to practice being cooperative and respectful. Assembly is held every day but when a theme is celebrated the 'Special Assembly' is celebrated with full participation. Peace assembly is held at least twice a year and on other days when need arises e.g a recent one was held on the life of the 14 year old peace activist- Malala Yusafzai.

Recommendations for Parents and Teachers

- *Model tolerance and compassion.*
- *Provide useful information.*
- *Avoid stereotyping people or countries.*
- *Stop any type of harassment or bullying immediately.*
- *Address the issue of blame factually. Discuss how it would feel to be blamed unfairly by association.*
- *Explore children's fears.*
- *Emphasize positive, familiar images of diverse groups.*
- *Identify "heroes" of varying backgrounds involved in response to traumatic events.*
- *Learn about the diverse communities and faiths represented in our area.*

Recommendations for Schools

- *Provide parents with information.* We try to send home materials on class lessons, book titles, resources for further information, and opportunities to help.
- *Train all school personnel.* All our staff are trained to model tolerance and are encouraged to intervene immediately if a child is being bullied. This includes cleaners, break and playground monitors, after school program leaders, coaches and extracurricular activities directors.
- *Share information with community groups.* We provide talking points, information, and intervention strategies to our local community through newsletters, leaflets and sometimes with the help of media.



"We don't have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world."

Howard Zinn

Conclusion

Having a just and a peaceful society is not just a dream, it's something achievable and the only medium to achieve is EDUCATION. The government and the people in power need to realise the true benefit of education and its impact on productivity and economic growth. The schools can play a positive role in bringing a culture of peace and harmony in the society. Without EDUCATION we will continue to dwell among the illiterate and chaotic nations of the world.

Children live what they learn (Dorothy Law)

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.

If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.

If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.

If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.

If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.

If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.

If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.

If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.

If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.

If children live with fairness, they learn justice.

If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.

If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.